RUSSIA UNDER SOVIET RULE

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Twenty Years of Bolshevik Experiment

by

N. DE BASILY

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TO
MY DEAR WIFE

Preface

CIRCUMSTANCES placed the author of the present volume in a position which enabled him to become thoroughly conversant with the working of the Government machinery in Russia, before the establishment of Bolshevism, and closely to observe the steady and social and economic progress of his country at that time.

From the beginning of this century to the very last moments of the old régime, as well as under the Provisional Government of 1917, the writer was in immediate contact with the various political circles both on the Government side and adherent to the opposition. Animated by a profound love of his native land and sustained by his firm faith in its future destiny, he has endeavoured, in the sad years of exile, to penetrate and grasp the deep underlying significance of the ordeal through which Russia has been passing during the last twenty years; he has striven to discover the premonitory signs and the general trend of her inevitable regeneration. In the following pages he has sought to present without preconceived prejudice—"without hatred and without fear"—the situation in Soviet Russia, as it developed since the Revolution of 1917, and the events which led up to it. Any thought of a return to past conditions must be dismissed; for this would be as impossible as it would be irrational. The revolutionary crisis through which Russia has passed and is still passing, however much suffering it may have brought, has irrevocably awakened the consciousness of great popular—mostly peasant—masses scattered over this immense country. Only by the objective study of contemporary facts, pursued in the light of the historic past, may the direction be discerned in which the national life of Russia will find its way towards a better and freer future.

Conceived in this spirit, the work now offered to the English-speaking readers—Russian[1] and French editions having already appeared—is based mainly on information drawn from Soviet sources, and more especially from official statistics issued by the

[1] Published in Paris.

U.S.S.R. authorities. The author is under no illusion as to the intrinsic value of these data and deems it his duty to caution his readers that they very often contain many inaccuracies due to the desire to present developments in the Soviet Union as being more favourable than is actually the case. Nevertheless, the mass of material published in the U.S.S.R. is so vast that, when analysed and computed, this information—imperfect as it is in many instances—clearly reveals the main outlines of the real situation. The conclusions which necessarily follow from these Sovietic data will often be found contradictory to the Bolshevik claims.

Developments in Soviet Russia are, to a certain extent, necessarily linked to the social and political evolution which the country was undergoing prior to the Revolution. On the contrary, the hurried and compulsory imposition of Socialism—the avowed primary aim of the Soviet Government—constitutes a complete rupture with the country's past. The Bolshevik epoch is therefore fated to inevitable internal contradictions, and the Soviet Government is consequently doomed to venture constantly on new experiments. The Bolshevik régime knows of a "yesterday" and of a possible "to-morrow." Ceaseless changes leave it with no consciousness of any "to-day."

The author has dealt at comparatively greater length with the economic problems of Soviet Russia than with the moral atmosphere there prevailing. Only a profound personal experience of daily life under the Soviet régime, resulting from a long stay in the U.S.S.R., can furnish an adequate idea of the degree of moral oppression weighing on the Sovietic citizens. Here also was a complete rupture with the past. In spite of the resistance and mistakes of the old régime, pre-revolutionary Russia was, even if with too great a delay, yet definitely moving towards liberty and democracy, especially since the introduction of a representative system in 1906, imperfect as it yet was.

* * *

To facilitate the reading of this work, the Gregorian Calendar—now commonly in use in all countries—has been utilized for all dates, including the events prior to February 8, 1918, before which date the old Julian Calendar was in force in Russia. Consequently,

the First Revolution of 1917 (which according to the old Russian Calendar was called the Revolution of February), as well as the Second Revolution of the same year (according to the same Calendar, the October Revolution) are in this book[1] referred to as the Revolutions of March and November, the months which were then in course in the rest of the world.

For the same reason the titles of the Russian publications cited in this book have generally been translated into English (for instance, *Za Industrializatsiu* into *For Industrialization*). *Pravda* (*Truth*) and *Izvestia* (*News*) have however been left in their native names.

In order to avoid confusion, the reader's attention is directed to a point which is essential to the understanding of the internal structure of the U.S.S.R. The same men hold official posts in both the Soviet State institutions and in the Communist Party itself. The latter absolutely controls all the public affairs of the Union. No other party may legally exist in the country. Yet the State machinery of the Soviet Union has always been asserted to be distinct from the Communist organization. The Soviets, however much they may have been under the domination of the Communist Party, have always been organs of the State. The "Executive Committees" and the "Central Executive Committee"—emanations of the Soviets—should not be confused with the "Committees" and the "Central Committees," which are organs of the Communist Party. It should also be remembered that the *Pravda* is the chief organ of the Communist Party, while *Izvestia* is the official newspaper of the Government.

* * *

In view of the very varied subject-matter of his study, the author felt it his duty to consult a number of his compatriots more particularly versed in certain special aspects of Russia's past and present. He has had frequent conversation with the Russian historian, Professor D. M. Odinetz, on various matters dealt with in this book. The well-known economist, Professor S. N. Prokopovich, has likewise, by his advice and information, largely contributed to this work. The author is also greatly indebted to Prince V. A. Obolensky. The brief limits of a preface, unfortunately, do not permit the author to describe the share of each contributor. There-

1 Even if a change in a quotation is necessitated thereby.

fore, to his great regret, it is only left for him to express his sincere thanks to A. M. Baikov, M. V. Bernatsky, G. P. Fedotov, N. N. Golovin, E. O. Lenskaia, the late V. A. Miakotin, the late A. A. Michelson, P. N. Miliukov, B. T. Nicolaevsky, the late T. S. Polner, the late A. N. Potresov-Starover, A. V. Rumanoff, P. B. Struve, G. P. Struve, N. S. Timasheff, T. T. Tkhorzhevsky and many others, to whom he offers his apologies for not mentioning them by name.

N. A. DE BASILY

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Contents

CHAPTER I

Russia before the Revolution of 1917

Russia's Backwardness

Fate made Russia a link between two continents, Europe and Asia. Hence Russia's "historical mission" as the eastern vanguard or bastion of Europe. Under the old régime pre-revolutionary Russia fulfilled this mission whatever may be said on this point. Real, integral Asia began only beyond the border of Russia. The latter, however, had to pay very dearly for her guardianship. From the foundation of the Russian State, and throughout several centuries, hosts of nomads invaded the steppes of Southern Russia. For a long period Russia vigorously repelled the incursions of these rapacious Asiatics. In the end her power was enfeebled and she succumbed to Tartar rule, which lasted two hundred and forty years (1240–1480). This period marked the zenith of Asiatic dominion over Russia.[1]

Towards the end of the XVth century Russia shook off the Tartar yoke. In the beginning of the following century she launched against Asia an offensive which developed into a series of conquests. In the course of this eastward drive she went far beyond the limits of the European continent. Two and a half centuries of Tartar dominion, however, had greatly hampered the country's general

1 The artistic achievements and the literary works which have come down to us from the first period of Russian history—the so-called Kiev period—prove that ancient Russian civilization was, for that time, on a high level. With her 200,000 inhabitants, her eight fairs, and her numerous churches, Kiev was then one of the most important European cities. On the threshold of the XIIth century the reigning Riurik dynasty was already firmly established in Russia, and was related by blood or marriage to the greatest reigning houses of Europe. In its art and mode of life, ancient Russia had certainly been influenced by the Western world, as well as by Byzantium and the Orient, but despite those foreign influences, the national character was preserved in all its original vigour. Long wars with wild nomad tribes and two hundred and fifty years of Tartar domination interrupted the development of Russian civilization, whose beginnings had been so brilliant and full of promise.

development. While Europe, shielded by Russia, was able to advance freely on the path of civilization, Russia herself remained stationary. Though belonging to the family of European nations, she was outdistanced by the Western countries by two or three centuries in the various fields of culture.

Russia found within herself, however, enough strength to atone for this delay. The age of Peter the Great (1682–1725), with its profound reforms, marked a turning-point in her destinies. She began to make up for lost time. Throughout the XVIIIth century her europeanization bore traces of imitation and apprenticeship. But towards the beginning of the XIXth century she ceased to follow obediently in the steps of her masters, and entered upon the path of original creation, especially in the domain of intellectual achievement.

With each decade the work of europeanization extended to new fields. Between 1860 and 1880 this development culminated in the Great Reforms of Alexander II. Russia could then no longer be taunted with all-round backwardness, as compared with the rest of Europe.

It is true that in fairly recent times Russia has had to submit to severe trials. Thus, not long before the Revolution of 1917, she underwent the ordeal of the Japanese war and the subsequent revolutionary disturbances of 1905–1906.

Material and Intellectual Progress of Russia on the Eve of the Great War

In fact, Russia recovered from these trials with an amazing rapidity which testified to the country's inherent vitality. Moreover, within the next ten years she made astounding economic progress. The exploitation of her resources advanced with unprecedented rapidity. The volume of her trade expanded. Her foreign trade balance became definitely favourable. The railway system was enormously extended and its traffic and revenue doubled. Russian industries prospered and developed at a rapid rate. The standard of living of the people in general was greatly increased, as consumption statistics showed. There was a notable increase in the amount of deposits in the State Savings Banks. The capital and turnover of the Co-operative Societies rose enormously. Owing to the skilful administration of such Finance Ministers as Bunge, Witte, and Kokovtsov, the Budget was well-balanced and the country's

finances, both State and local, placed on a sound basis. From the introduction, in 1897, of the gold standard and of the convertibility of banknotes into gold, the Russian rouble, the national monetary unit, enjoyed unquestioned stability.[1] In 1914 the rapidly growing

[1] The following statistics show the rhythm of Russia's economic progress during the years preceding the War (except for foreign trade, the figures are for the former Empire without Finland):

Foreign Trade: exports, imports and turnover (in millions of gold roubles)

1901–1905 (average) ..	941·4	632·1	1,573·5
1906–1910 (average) ..	1,204·6	910·3	2,114·9
1913	1,520·1	1,374·0	2,894·1

Railways	
1890	29,063 kilometres (18,031 miles)
1905 ..	59,327 (36,808 „)
1914 (Jan. 1)	69,916 (43,378 „)
Transport of goods by rail	
1900	125,143,200 metric tons
1905	189,369,180
1913	253,759,960
Net profit from railways	
1908	169 million gold roubles
1912	449 „
Output of sugar	
Average for the years 1904–1905	837,000 metric tons
Average for the years 1913–1914	1,532,000 „ „
Area under cotton	
1908	307,000 hectares (758,597 acres)
1914	493,000 „ (1,218,103 „)
(1 hectare = 2·471 acres)	
Total volume of industrial production	
1870	500 million gold roubles
1890	1,502 „
1912	5,738 „
Output of pig iron	
1889	726,633 metric tons
1906	2,692,233 „ „
1913	4,634,884 „ „
Output of coal	
1900	16,155,594 metric tons
1906	21,728,070 „
1913 ..	36,268,044 „
Consumption of sugar per head of population	
Average for the years 1890–1896	8·7 Russian lb.
Average for the years 1905–1906	14·7 „
In 1913	18·2 „

(1 Russian lb. = 409 grammes or 0·9 lb. avoir.)

[*Footnote continued on next page.*

population reached 175,000,000 inhabitants. Education and the general standard of culture advanced by rapid steps.

Between 1906 and 1916 the number of elementary schools doubled and the Government expenditure on elementary education increased nearly tenfold.[1] At the outbreak of the World War the plan for compulsory elementary education adopted by the Duma (the elected legislative body) needed only eight years more to be completely realized. Secondary and higher schools, constantly increasing in number, were overflowing with students of

Footnote continued from page 15]

Consumption of butter per head of population

1911		8·1 Russian lb.
1912		9·3 ,,
1913		10·6 ,,

Deposits in the State Savings Banks

1908		1,430·3 million gold roubles
1913	over	2,000·0 ,,

Peasant Co-operative Societies of Mutual Credit

Membership

1905	729,000 members
1916	10,478,000

Deposits

1905	37·5 million gold roubles
1916	682·3 ,, ,,

Stocks, Shares, and Bond Issues (held in Russia), private mortgages and Russian Bank and Insurance company available assets

1904	11,300 million gold roubles
1913	19,000 ,, ,,

New Issues of Russian Securities (Stocks, Shares, and Bonds) subscribed in Russia

1904 to 1908	2,861 million gold roubles
1909 to 1913	3,840

New Issues of Russian Securities subscribed abroad

1904 to 1908	1,517 million gold roubles
1909 to 1913	1,718 ,, ,,

The enormous progress for the period between 1906–1914, as shown by these figures, was prepared by the impetus given to economic life, and specially to industry, by Count Witte, who was Minister of Finance from 1893 to 1903.

See also A. Raffalovich, *Russia: its Trade and Commerce*, London, King, 1918.

(One gold rouble contained 0·774234 gramme of pure gold, and was equivalent, before the World War, in then existing other currencies, to:

2·66 gold francs of the Latin Union,
2s. 1·37d. gold,
0·51 U.S.A. gold dollar.)

1 Hans and Hessen, *Educational Policy in Soviet Russia*, London, 1930. Count P. Ignatiev, Odinetz and Novgorotsev, *Russian School in the World War*, Yale University Press, 1929.

both sexes.[1] Educated people became rapidly more numerous. Intellectual workers easily found the most varied employment in a country in full progress.

The Evolution of Sovereign Power

The economic and cultural development of the country was not the only sign of its general progress. The Sovereign Power itself also underwent evolution, at least in its outward application, although its autocratic character was maintained until the revolutionary crisis of 1905–1906.[2] Russian life was becoming more and

1 The following figures exhibit the progress of education in Russia on the eve of the Great War (for the former Empire without Finland):

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Years	*No. of Schools*	*No. of Pupils*
1880	22,770	1,140,015
1911	100,295	6,180,510
End of 1914	122,123	8,146,637

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Years	*No. of Boys' Schools*	*No. of Pupils*
1880	199	51,097 (figure for 1875)
1911	577	108,360 (figure for 1905)
1915	797	240,910

The above figures for secondary education do not comprise the commercial and technical schools (depending from the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance), the Military schools, and the Church schools.

To these figures must also be added the secondary schools for girls. The number of pupils in these schools amounted in 1915 to 323,577.

In 1914 the number of higher schools (i.e. Universities and higher technical schools of University grade) was over a hundred, with nearly 150,000 students. In Russia higher education for women was considerably in advance of many European countries. On the eve of the Great War there were about 50,000 women students in Russian higher schools.

In 1894 the number of books printed in Russia was 32 millions. Steadily increasing annually, the output for the year 1912 amounted to 134 millions.

2 Autocracy—in the sense of European absolute monarchy, where the Prince was the source of all law, but himself not bound by laws—was established in Russia at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, under the first Russian Emperor, Peter the Great, whose reign marked the initial phase of enlightened absolutism, or "Polizeistaat." Russian absolutism had for its theoretical exponent Theophanus Prokopovich, ecclesiastical writer and famous preacher of the period. In his writings he based his arguments on political works published in Western Europe, as well as on the Scriptures.

The term "autocracy," however, was used in Russia at a much earlier time. It dates from the Muscovite period at the end of the XVth century. Originally it expressed the external independence attained by the Tsars of Moscow when they shook off the Mongolian yoke. At that time it did not by any means express

more imbued with the principles of law, so that, by the end of the XIXth century, methods of government similar to those employed by so complete an autocrat as Nicholas I (1825–1855) became utterly impossible. The energy with which the Russian public condemned administrative abuses and miscarriages of justice, and the care with which the perpetrators of such acts endeavoured to disguise them under legal appearances, prove that the principle of legality and respect for public interest had already to a great extent penetrated the minds of both the rulers and the ruled.[1]

Bureaucracy

The Russian State's administrative machinery was, on the whole, quite satisfactory. Its officials, of all grades, comprised a large number of well-educated, competent, and devoted public servants. The situation, in this respect, was very much less satisfactory in the branches of the administration responsible for mould-

the degree of personal power vested in the monarch in domestic concerns of the State. Ivan IV the Terrible (1533–1584) was the first to attempt to endow this term with a new meaning. He gave a broader interpretation to his autocracy, and proclaimed his absolute power to administer the country as he thought fit; however, he never pretended that he had the right to modify at his will the legal system then existing in Muscovy.

Throughout the Muscovite period, custom, and not statute, was considered to be the fundamental source of law. Until the second half of the XVIIth century a great part was played in the actual administration of the country by the *Mir*, or local self-governing bodies, and by the *Zemski Sobor*, which were assemblies of the representatives of all the social orders of the country (with the exception of slaves and serfs). According to the ideas of the period, these "States General" personified the whole country—"the whole land," as it was then legally termed. The Tsars of Moscow, in the course of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, relied more than once on their authority in important State matters. The well-known Russian historian Kliutchevsky sums up in the following succinct formula the real extent of power exercised by the Tsars of Moscow: "All-powerful with regard to the people, they had no power to modify social relations."

In the pre-Muscovite period—the so-called Kiev period—there was neither a unified State nor a strong personal ruler in Russia. Each prince—*knyaz*—of this early age shared his power, within his dominions, with a popular assembly called the *veche*, the jurisdiction of which extended over all matters, without exception. Thus, in those remote days, there was a marked dualism of power. The conflicts between the *knyaz* and the *veche* were settled in accordance with their respective effective forces and influence.

1 Even in the XIXth century, when Russian absolutism was still in full force, the law was far from being considered as a mere "technical regulation"—void of moral content and embodying no principle—the role to which it had been reduced under the Soviet régime. The authorities no doubt encroached upon personal liberties, but they never went so far as to suppress them altogether, as the Bolsheviks, without the slightest hesitation, did later.

ing and applying "internal policy," and especially in the Ministry for the Interior, some of whose officials (particularly in the police) have left behind them most painful memories. Such men contributed greatly in broadening the psychological breach between the Supreme Power and the public, which was one of the principal causes of the collapse of the old régime in March 1917. In other departments, not concerned with what may be described as internal police policy such as Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, and Foreign Affairs, the officials were by no means unworthy of their task. Any abuses which may have occurred in these departments were not more flagrant than those in many other countries of modern Europe.

Justice

The judiciary reform which Alexander II (1855–1881) carried out in 1864, had given Russia an easily accessible and speedy system of courts, which provided every guarantee of equity. Through their excellent organization, and especially through the independence of the Judges, whose irremovability was strictly observed, Russian Courts of Justice came to occupy one of the foremost places in Europe. Yet, with respect to crimes relative to the defence of the régime, the Government, for reasons of domestic policy, soon renounced certain fundamental principles which underlay the reform of 1864.[1]

Local Self-Government

The elective local self-government bodies—*Zemstvos* in the country, and municipalities in the towns—were among the main results of those Great Reforms of Alexander II which marked a decisive step in the direction of Russia's europeanization.[2] In spite of the

1 Codes of judicial procedure were frequently violated in the reign of Alexander III, and still more so during that of Nicholas II, but in political cases only.

2 Local self-government institutions in towns had been created by Peter the Great as early as the first quarter of the XVIIIth century. But Peter's reform had more than one drawback. In 1785 Catherine II introduced considerable improvements into the Russian municipal system. It was, however, not until the reign of Alexander II that, as a result of the municipal reform of 1870, the autonomous administration of towns was given independence and much wider powers. A few years earlier (in 1864) Alexander II had created the *zemstvo*, or provincial self-government institution, operating in the rural areas and in minor urban units. Representatives of every social order were eligible to those provincial assemblies, although the electoral system gave a predominance to the landed

obstacles which they encountered during the reactionary reigns of Alexander III (1881–1894) and of Nicholas II (1894–1917), local self-governing bodies were able to develop, in the course of the fifty years of their existence, an extremely fertile influence in the most varied fields of economic and cultural life. Russia owed them a great deal. To them was principally due the marked progress of education. Thanks to the *Zemstvos*, too, the problem of medical aid and public hygiene began to be solved in the provinces. The creation of a wide network of roads was also the subject of their constant attention. Lack of adequate transport facilities have always been one of the great evils of Russian provincial life. Thanks to the *Zemstvos*, veterinary services were created in the country, and the peasants were induced appreciably to improve their methods of cultivation. The *Zemstvos* undertook to supply them with modern agricultural implements and to organize model farms. Finally, they contributed largely to the organization of food supply services, which furnished the people with food in time of scarcity, but which were in a chaotic state before the reforms of Alexander II. Suffice it to say that, on the eve of the war of 1914, the budgets of the municipalities and *zemstvos* equalled one-fifth of the State budget, although the latter included such heavy items of expenditure as those for the Army and Navy, for the working of the spirit monopoly, and of the State railways.

Disintegration of the Old Social System and Democratization of Russian Life

Towards the middle of the XIXth century the old social system based on the "orders"[1] entered upon a period of increasing disin-

nobility. At the beginning, *zemstvos* were introduced in only thirty-four provinces (called "governments"). On the eve of the Revolution of 1917 they had been already introduced in forty-six provinces of European Russia (out of the existing fifty-one, plus the Finnish and Polish provinces). The Provisional Government—set up in 1917, after the downfall of the monarchy—extended local self-government to the rest of the country, and reorganized it on a basis of universal suffrage.

1 From the legal point of view the population of Russia was distributed into five "orders" or "estates": the nobility, the clergy, the honorary citizens, the burghers, and the peasants. (These "orders" are known in Russia as *soslovie*, which is the Russian equivalent of the German "*Stand*" and the French *état*, and which must not be confused with the term "class," in its modern economic sense.) The burgher group comprised several categories: merchants, little bourgeois, artizans, and generally all those who did not belong to any other order. Until it was abolished in 1917, the effect of the system was to give one part of the population, in the eyes of the law, certain privileges. The privileged orders were:

tegration. This process was accompanied with the levelling and democratization of social relations. Here was an incontestable sign of Russia having entered upon the inevitable path of evolution common to all the peoples of Western civilization.

By the end of the XIXth century the nobility had long since ceased effectively to fulfil its former role as the basis of the throne and as the chief factor in cultural life.[1] Already, from the middle of the XIXth century, it had more and more given way before other social groups, when it did not merge with them. The "sixties" and "seventies" of last century marked the end of the nobility's monopoly in the domains of literature, art, and science. On the other hand, when the serfs were emancipated, in 1861, the landed nobility had lost its right to avail itself of unpaid rural labour, and from then entered upon a period of definite economic decline. On the eve of the Revolution of 1917, the estates of the nobles were almost submerged in the sea of the peasant holdings. The Government itself, while continuing ostensibly to regard the nobility as its main support, had in fact more and more relied on the bureaucracy to direct the country's destinies. It thus contributed towards depriving the nobility of such influence on Russian life as it still retained. The nobles lost the habit of linking their lives with their estates, and relinquished their interest in the local affairs. Henceforth they more and more turned to public-service careers and found in the employment of the State the primary source of their means of subsistence.[2]

Simultaneously with the decline of the nobility's former importance a new social force emerged: the bourgeoisie. Its advent was

the nobility and the clergy, as well as the honorary citizens, which latter occupied an intermediate social position between the higher groups and the mass of the population. In principle, all the orders were hereditary, but education, wealth, and especially State service (military or civil)—under conditions specified by law—enabled people to rise from one order to another, and even to enter the ranks of the hereditary nobility. The bulk of the Russian nobility was untitled. No legal difference existed between titled and non-titled nobility. The latter in many ways corresponded in status with the English "gentry."

1 The culminating phase in the creative activity of the Russian nobility was reached in the reign of Catherine II, in the second half of the XVIIIth century. At that time it was the most cultured, the wealthiest, and the best organized social group.

2 This, of course, did not apply to the whole of the nobility. Many of them preferred independent careers in various fields, or devoted themselves to advancing Russian culture in its manifold aspects. But it was not with this group of the nobility that the Russian monarchy linked its destinies at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century.

the result of the growth of industry and commerce which had rapidly developed in Russia from the middle of the XIXth century. By the time it had attained a certain social importance, it had ceased to be an "order," and had become a "class," in the modern sense of the term. And yet, until the overthrow of the monarchy, Russian legislation continued to refer to the "orders" of merchants and "small bourgeois," thus classing them as inferior to the nobility. This discrimination was not an insuperable obstacle to the ceaseless advance of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the Government's policy—which was essentially based on the maintenance of the "orders" and the predominance of the nobility—could not but irritate the industrial and commercial community which resented this policy as a useless and absurd impediment to the normal development of the country.

Finally, the disintegration of the old system of "orders" manifested itself in the eagerness with which members of the lower classes of society fought their way into the upper strata. They advanced into the most varied fields of activity. Parallel with the economic decline of the nobility, which was obliged to sell a large proportion of its landed property, there was a constant growth of acreage owned by the peasants. But what characterized—most of all, perhaps—the importance of the social changes which occurred in Russia on the eve of the Revolution of 1917 was the eagerness for knowledge which literally carried the Russian masses off their feet at the end of the last century. By the beginning of the XXth century they were fully aware of the advantages which education offered them. During the Great War—when, for financial reasons, the erection of new school buildings was suspended—the elementary schools, which had already largely increased in number, became inadequate to accommodate all the peasant children for whom their parents desired instruction. Notwithstanding the obstacles which the Government had placed in their way, the urban and rural masses, long before the Revolution, had begun their race for secondary and higher education.[1] In 1910 statistics already showed

1 In 1887 the Minister of Education Delianov issued a circular which became famous. "The Minister, desirous of improving the quality of pupils in the secondary schools," it ran, "has deemed it necessary to admit into those establishments only those children who find at home a proper general guidance.... Thus, the secondary schools will be relieved of the children of coachmen, valets, cooks, washerwomen, small shopkeepers, and other people whose children it would be wrong to draw away from the environment to which they belong." Subsequently, and until

that the nobility were far from being in the majority in the Russian state *lycées*: that is, in this type of secondary school in which a classical programme prevailed. This situation had arisen in spite of the fact that the Minister of Education had endeavoured to safeguard these schools from entry by lower-class elements.[1]

It is to be observed, then, that from the middle of the XIXth century Russia's social and political development tended towards democratization and that with each decade this process was becoming more evident. At the same time, and with equal rapidity, democratic ideas were spreading in the country, and a certain experience in public affairs was gradually being obtained by the people. This is especially true of the local self-governing bodies, which continued to give the happiest results in improving the conditions of provincial life. At the beginning of the XXth century, the elected members of the *Zemstvos* furnished the nucleus of the *Constitutional-Democratic* (or "*K.D.*") Party, the most active and progressive of the Russian Liberal groups. It was by reason of his presidency of the Union of *Zemstvos* that Prince George Lvov found himself, quite naturally, at the outbreak of the Revolution of 1917, placed at the head of the Provisional Government. The permanent officials of the *Zemstvos* and municipalities, who in most cases belonged to the radical or socialistic *intelligentzia*—often described as

Count Paul Ignatiev's term of office in 1915, the Ministry of Education continued to restrict as far as possible the admission of children of the lower classes to the *lycées*.

1 The figures below present a picture of the distribution of children enjoying secondary education according to the social standing of their parents. These figures are typical, although they apply only to one of the several territorial divisions into which Russia was arranged for purposes of public education.

LYCÉES, WITH CLASSICAL CURRICULUM (GYMNASES).

Years	*Nobles and officials* Per cent	*Town residents, neither nobles nor officials* Per cent	*Peasants* Per cent
1888	62·9	26·9	6·2
1894	66·8	23·7	5·9
1902	58·8	26·2	10·8
1910	37·3	39·0	18·4

OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHOUT CLASSICAL CURRICULUM (REALS).

1888	53·9	31·1	11·4
1894	52·4	33·1	11·4
1902	50·0	38·1	14·3
1910	25·6	42·8	28·1

the "third estate"—were acquiring in their work familiarity with public matters. The co-operative movement, also, contributed to stimulate social initiative. When the Government, after the revolutionary outbreak of 1905–1906, gave up much of its former suspicion in regard to independent public organizations, co-operative associations respectively for consumption, production, and credit, increased with great rapidity, and soon covered all Russia with their network. Their development was greatly fostered by the improving standard of comfort of the masses, and the rise in their educational level. The co-operative associations—and particularly, the more powerful among them, the credit societies—gained a sound footing in the very heart of the life of the Russian people, and furnished to both the urban and rural populations an excellent training ground for public affairs.[1]

After the revolutionary outbreak of 1905, when Russia was granted representative institutions, interest in politics ceased to be a species of monopoly for the select few, and gradually permeated larger and larger circles of the population. By the eve of the 1917 Revolution, many factors were already at work throughout Russia capable of maturing those democratic germs which had unquestionably generated during the previous decade.

Public Opinion

An unmistakable sign of the progress of the Russian people was revealed by the important part which public opinion had come to exercise on the life of the nation. Ever since the middle of the XIXth century, long before the reforms of 1905–1906, which had established representative institutions and given Russia a political platform, public opinion had reflected the ideas and aspirations of all the cultured elements in Russia. With each decade this public opinion imposed itself more and more on the subordinate administration, the higher bureaucracy, and even the Sovereign Power. Neither the censorship nor the extensive use of administrative

1 These co-operative bodies, by granting cheap credit to the farmers, dealt a heavy blow to the village money-lenders. These associations also undertook to supply their members with agricultural implementss and other necessary articles. Their activity met with large support from the *Zemstvos*, and the co-operative gradually became a leading factor in the economic life of the village.

The advent of the Bolsheviks destroyed all forms of independent co-operation. What are called co-operatives, in Soviet Russia to-day, have nothing to do with the idea of free co-operation. The co-operatives are now mere bureaucratic institutions, dependent on the State.

restrictions of all kinds succeeded in checking free thought or preventing it from exercising its influence.[1] The channels through which public opinion normally found expression were manifold: literary and scientific publications, newspapers, and reviews of large circulation,[2] scientific and cultural societies, congresses from time to time of members of *Zemstvos* or of municipal councils, professional organizations connected with industry and commerce, conventions of physicians, lawyers, and teachers, and even students' meetings. Russian public opinion thus enunciated, comprised widely different trends of thought, nearly all of which were little to the liking of the Government.[3]

Such were the positive factors which determined Russia's development during the period preceding the Revolution of 1917. At the same time, however, the creative elements of Russian life had to struggle against obstacles which not only impeded the country's progress but even threatened to reverse it.

The Anachronisms of the Old Régime

Despite its apparent evolution, the Sovereign Power often acted as a hindrance to the normal progress of the country. Russian

1 The gradual introduction of liberty of the Press and of meetings began under the reign of Alexander II.

From 1865 on Russian newspapers and periodicals were under certain conditions free from the obligation to submit to the censor their entire text, before being printed, but they still had to comply with numerous instructions issued by the Ministry for the Interior, which prohibited (at the risk of penalties) all mention of certain subjects and ideas which the Government considered undesirable. It was only at the end of 1904 that relative freedom of the Press was actually established. The control by the authorities continued, but was greatly attenuated. It was thenceforward no longer necessary to obtain preliminary authorization to publish a newspaper. It sufficed to have it registered. Censorship was suppressed in all cases in which it still had been maintained. Official surveillance over publications of all kinds was to a great extent replaced by making the editors responsible before the criminal courts.

In 1904 freedom of speech was also allowed within certain limitations. Public meetings were no longer subjected to previous authorization by the police, who thenceforward retained only the right to send to all kinds of gatherings a representative, who had power to bring to an end any meeting which he considered of a dangerous character.

2 For instance, at the end of 1916 the average circulation of the liberal newspaper *Russkoe Slovo* exceeded one million copies daily.

3 What the Bolsheviks nowadays parade as the "public opinion" of the workers differs fundamentally from pre-revolutionary public opinion. The latter was always an expression of freely formed ideas and tendencies, very often in plain opposition to the régime, while in the U.S.S.R. alleged "public opinion" always obeys, with servile unanimity, inspiration and orders from those in power.

autocracy had, no doubt, in the past, rendered great services to the nation. In the creation of the vast Empire, in its inner organization, and in the development of its civilization, the absolute monarchy played a part of primordial importance. But although the life of the country, as we have seen, had greatly changed, the Government still endeavoured, by all the means in its power, even after the granting of the Constitution, to retain its old autocratic methods, and thus became an anachronism. In the second half of the XIXth century, and at the beginning of the XXth, the Russian nation then in full evolution was no longer in need of being kept under guardianship: it now wanted the opportunity for free expansion. Insisting on the right to rule the country autocratically, the Sovereign Power ran counter to vast currents of public opinion, from which it became more and more alienated. Thereby it was constrained to resort constantly to means of firm administrative pressure. In defence of its prerogative, autocracy unhesitatingly had recourse to various emergency measures—such as proclaiming "a state of reinforced protection" in certain parts of the country—the effect of which was to restrict individual liberty, to suspend normal administrative methods, and to enable discretionary police action.

On the other hand, the attitude of the Government was plainly in contradiction with the obvious disintegration of the old hierarchical system of the "orders." While the entire trend of Russia's recent history had been towards the complete disappearance of this social system, already abandoned in the rest of Europe, the Government, accustomed to regard it as a natural support of monarchy, could not make up its mind to relinquish this obsolete social structure. It persisted in relying on the remnants of the old landed nobility and in under-estimating the real vital forces of the country. The Russian legislation still in force at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century was thus profoundly out of harmony with the spirit of the period and the claims of modern life.

The Special Status of the Peasantry

The condition of the peasant community was, until the very last days of the monarchy, especially out of date. The peasants, who constituted 80 per cent of the population, were relegated to the lowest rank of citizens in the hierarchy of the "orders."

It is true that, after the revolutionary crisis of 1905, the Govern-

ment was obliged, to a certain extent, to mitigate the regulations governing the "orders," especially so far as the peasants were concerned. Certain taxes and legal restrictions solely affecting the peasants were suppressed. Corporal punishment, which the peasant cantonal courts (manned by elected peasant judges) were entitled to inflict on peasants, was abolished, as were also certain passport regulations, which impeded the peasant's liberty to change his residence. The collective responsibility of the members of a village community towards the State Treasury, with respect to taxes, was likewise removed.

Nevertheless, the life of the peasantry, as an "order," continued to be regulated, in many respects, by special legislation, and to be subject to a special administration, which accentuated the line of demarcation between them and the rest of the population. The peasant community of each village as well as each group of neighbouring communities (constituting a *volost* or canton) was endowed with a special kind of self-government. The peasants' assemblies, composed of the heads of families, elected their own "elders," "headmen," etc. These peasant officials were subordinated to the local police officer and had not only to serve the need of the peasants but also those of the general administration of the rural area. From 1889 onwards, the peasant self-governing bodies were placed under the authority of "rural chiefs" (*Zemski nachalnik*), who became the real controllers of village life. These officials were nominated by the Government and selected from among the local nobility. The rural peasant assemblies were required to submit all their decisions to the rural chiefs, who held a limited power of veto. All the elected peasant officials were placed under the direct authority of the rural chiefs, who could inflict judicial punishment, without the right of appeal.[1] Finally, the rural chiefs selected from a list of candidates submitted to them by the peasant assemblies, the members of the cantonal courts. These peasants' courts had jurisdiction in all civil matters affecting peasants. Their judgments were not based on the Civil Code to which the rest of the population was subject, but on local custom. The application of this unwritten law naturally opened the door to frequent abuses, especially on the part of the cantonal clerks. The judgment of one and the same court frequently varied

1 Under the conditions of peasant life these punishments were rather severe: the rural chief could dismiss a peasant official, impose on him a fine up to five roubles, and put him under arrest for not more than a week.

considerably in similar cases, according to the "custom" which the "scribe" chose to invoke.

The special régime under which the peasants were thus isolated necessarily had a pernicious influence on their state of mind as well as on that of other social categories and contributed to maintain in Russia a flagrant inequality of existence, which penetrated the minutest details of everyday life. Although serfdom had been abolished under Alexander II, by the famous Manifesto of February 19, 1861,[1] the personal emancipation of the peasants had not

1 The system of serfdom, which had been established gradually during the Muscovite period, had been condemned from the end of the XVIIIth century by the enlightened minds of Russia. It did not disappear, however, until after the Crimean War, which revealed the internal weakness of the Empire, and provoked Alexander II's Great Reforms.

The law of February 19, 1861, brought to an end the personal dependence of the peasant in respect of the landowners, and stipulated that the latter should endow each male peasant with the inalienable right to enjoy the use of his house and outbuildings, and of a certain area of arable land, in return for a fixed annual payment to the landowner, either in cash or in kind (in the latter case in the form of a given number of days of work). The whole of Russia was divided into three territorial zones, according to the value and natural richness of the soil. In each of these zones the amount of land to be allotted to the peasants "per male soul" oscillated between certain given superficial maxima and minima. In practice, the peasants actually received, as a rule, parcels of land which were a little smaller in area than those they had cultivated under serfdom, the ground thus taken away from them being known as "cuts."

The same law conferred on the peasants the right to purchase—on an instalment system of payments—the land which had thus been attributed to them. Except as concerned the house and out-buildings, the detailed conditions of this operation were subject to mutual agreement between the peasants and the landlord. The State acted as banker, and paid over the entire purchase price to the landlord forthwith, in the form of interest-bearing State securities. At the same time, the State replaced the landlord as the peasant's creditor, the State being reimbursed by the peasants, by instalments spread over forty-nine years. In 1905, at the period of the disturbance sometimes referred to as "the First Russian Revolution," the Government annulled the whole of the instalments still outstanding.

The land allotted to the peasants was not handed over to them in private ownership, but became communal property, the legal title being vested in the so-called "land community." After some hesitation, the Government of Alexander II adopted this course, which it believed best adapted to the psychology and interests of the peasants. On the other hand, this system made it possible to maintain, in each rural community, the joint and collective responsibility of the peasants in respect to tax-paying, which was in the interests of the Treasury. The land community had the right to revise the distribution of the communal land among the households, as approved by two-thirds of the heads of the village families. In fact, such redistributions were seldom made, and as time went on became less and less frequent. In the event of the death of a peasant his holding was divided between his surviving sons, but this inheritance system applied only as long as no fresh redistribution of the land (as mentioned above) occurred.

The origins of the communal land system, and the causes of its formation, are

been completed, even at the advent of the Revolution of 1917. As late as the beginning of the XXth century, anybody who was not a peasant was still instinctively regarded by the *muzhiks* as a master, a *barin*. The two were as far apart, psychologically and materially, as the poles. Even the differences in the petty details of their lives—their clothes, their food, their abodes, the manner in which each looked upon his part and place in human society—all revealed the profound gulf that divided them. This was noticeable in the demeanour of officials who, while striving to appear irreproachable in their relations with members of other classes, did not stand on ceremony when dealing with the peasants. The attitude of the rural chief, the police inspector, and other local functionaries in charge of the peasant population, fluctuated between patriarchal guardianship and shameless bullying and illegalities.

Communal Land Ownership and Peasant Conception of Law

The system of communal land ownership broadened the distance which divided the peasants from the rest of the population. By far the greater part of the land allotted to the peasants, at the time of the emancipation, did not pass into their individual ownership, but became the common property of the peasant communities. It was thus made difficult for the peasants to develop the sentiment of respect for private property.[1]

still being debated by historians. Yet recent researches clearly show that communal tenure of land, and its periodical redistribution, did not appear until the second half of the XVIIIth century, when serfdom was already at its height. The formation of land communities was greatly encouraged by Peter the Great's introduction of a personal tax, levied equally on all peasants. They were, indeed, unable to pay their taxes unless each disposed of a certain amount of land. Thus, the land community, of comparatively recent origin, came to be gradually grafted on to the remnants of the ancient peasant *mir*, the smallest unit of the self-governing bodies in Muscovite Russia. It is therefore unfounded to assert, as did the Russian Populists, that the land community represented a specifically national and traditional element of Russian rural life, and was a proof that the Russian peasant was socialistically minded.

1 The eminent statesman of the last two reigns, Count Witte, on several occasions, in 1898 and again in 1904, vainly pointed out in his reports to Nicholas II that it was necessary to cease regarding the peasant as "a half-child who must be held under guardianship." He insisted on the necessity for applying to the peasant the laws normally governing all other citizens; in brief, on making him—juridically speaking—into a "person," instead of the "half-person" he was asserted to be. Witte was convinced that the communal land régime had checked the economic progress of the peasantry, and therefore of Russia as

It should, however, be noted that communal land ownership was never accompanied by any collectivization in the actual methods of exploitation. A certain amount of land was allotted to each family, who exploited it individually for its own benefit with its own implements and according to its own judgment.

Peasants' Craving for Land

Since the emancipation, the area of peasant land had constantly been increasing, chiefly at the expense of large landowners. Upwards of 75 per cent of the acreage of the nobles' estates passed, between 1861 and 1917, into the hands of the peasants. Without including the land which they held on lease, the peasantry found themselves, at the end of that period, in the possession of three times the amount of the land owned by all non-peasant proprietors taken together, with the exception of that belonging to the State.[1] This displacement of landed property was due partly to the fact that a large proportion of the land-owning nobility found themselves no longer able to exploit their land with profit when they had to employ wage-earners. As they became more and more indebted, they yielded to the temptation of selling out to the peasants at attractively high prices. On the other hand, with the increase of the population, and the consequent reduction of the average area of the individual peasant-family holdings comprised in the communal-lands, the peasants were anxious to secure additional ground. Having no labour-cost to consider, they were prepared to offer high prices for it. The special "Peasants' State Bank," created in 1882, could

a whole. In his view, the life of the Russian masses had been vitiated by "the retarded development of personality, and consequently of the sense of property and of aspirations towards civic liberties" (Count Witte, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 441, 444, 445, 452, and 470).

1 At the time of the emancipation the peasants, in European Russia, received, as communal property, around 152 million hectares (375,592,000 acres). From 1861 to 1917 they acquired in addition to that land a further 49 million hectares (121,079,000 acres), partly under collective, but mostly under individual ownership. These latter acquisitions were made by the better-off minority. Altogether, the peasants possessed, in 1917, about 202 million hectares (543,620,000 acres), representing three-quarters of the whole area of arable land and pasturage in European Russia. Non-peasant landowners owned, in 1917, only about 72 million hectares (177,912,000 acres), including forests; that is, one-third of the peasant holdings. The nobility, in particular, had only from 38 to 44 million hectares left (93,898,000 to 108,727,000 acres). The State and the public institutions owned at the same time about 160 million hectares (395,360,000 acres), consisting almost entirely of forests, and barren land (the *tundras*) of the extreme north.

always be counted on for advances representing an important proportion of the purchase price. Thanks also to the improvement in rural economy, the condition of the peasants was visibly improving, at least comparatively. A minority of them was already attaining easy circumstances. The economic situation of the majority, however, remained precarious, especially in the north and east of European Russia.

Several reasons prompted the peasantry to seek a remedy by increasing the size of their holdings, rather than by improving their methods of cultivation. Among these reasons were the then prevalent Russian methods of non-intensive farming (which left one-third of the suface fallow every year); the inferior quality of the peasants' live-stock and implements; the absence of cheap working credit; the burden of taxation and dues imposed on peasants by the State and the *Zemstvos*; and also the peasants' own ignorance.[1] Thus, until the XXth century, the Russian peasants continued to dream, as their forefathers had done, of a partition among them of all the land that its owners did not cultivate in person. They saw in this so-called "black partition" the only fair solution of the agrarian problem.

The Peasants Lose Faith in the Tsar

The revolutionary events of 1905 seemed to have brought nearer the fulfilment of that dream. The newly created legislative body, the Duma, was engaged in a struggle with the Government, with a view to obtaining an agrarian reform.[2] The peasant world followed

1 At the time of the peasants' emancipation (1861) the amount of land allotted to them represented in communal ownership on the average of 13·8 acres per individual male. The size of peasant holdings per male head had decreased by 1880 to 10 acres, and by 1900 to 7·3 acres. The increase in population during this period would have reduced still more the acreage at the disposal of each peasant, if there had been no migration of a part of the peasant population to the growing industrial centres, or to newly developed agricultural regions in Siberia and elsewhere. Western European farmers might have been satisfied with the area of land held by the Russian peasants at the end of the XIXth century. The latter felt, however, that they were quite insufficiently provided for which was mainly due to the just mentioned shortcomings. Lack of sufficient land had become a growing cause of complaint of the Russian peasant.

2 In the first and second legislatures of the Duma the parties of the Left had a clear majority. The peasant deputies belonged for the most part to the Socialist group of "Labourites" (*Trudoviki*), which advocated the distribution by the State of all private estates among those peasants who cultivated their land personally, without recourse to paid labour. The Radicals (that is, the *Constitutional-Democratic*

with anxious interest the fluctuations of that struggle. To their disappointment, the first two legislatures of the Duma were dissolved by Imperial decree. The Government then promulgated a new electoral law, which reduced the peasant representation in this assembly to an impotent minority. The peasant masses then lost their old faith in the Tsar. The hopes they had placed in the Duma were also shattered. Henceforth they were in a mood to support the revolutionary movement. Such a state of mind, in a class which constituted more than three-quarters of the Empire's population, was the principal cause of the instability of the new political régime established after the crisis of 1905.

Stolypin's Agrarian Reform

The first statesman to take practical steps to cope with this danger was Peter A. Stolypin, then Prime Minister. In 1906 he caused a law to be passed which authorized every peasant (or, more exactly, every head of a peasant family) to detach his holding from the communal land and to convert it into private property. This new law dealt a severe blow to the prevailing system of communal land ownership. The Government spared neither money nor trouble to make effective this reform, which was named after Stolypin. Those peasants who availed themselves of the facilities of the new law were favoured in many ways, including the granting of easy credit terms for the improvement of their live-stock, equipment, etc. The result was that within ten years—from 1906 to 1916—three million peasant households (or 20 per cent of their total) were withdrawn from the communal land system and their holdings transformed in veritable freeholds.[1]

Stolypin's reform contributed undeniably to strengthen in a portion of the peasants that sense of property which began to manifest itself among them after the abolition of serfdom. It is quite probable that, if completed and adapted to the needs of the time, this reform would, in the long run, have transformed the majority

or "*K.D.*" party), who played the predominant part in the first two Dumas, proposed to expropriate, but with reasonable compensation, all private lands exceeding a certain area, and to distribute the land thus made available solely between peasants who were landless or possessed an insufficient acreage.

1 This reform was accompanied by an offer made by the Government to those who desired to become freeholders to group into farm units the often widely scattered plots of communal land which they had formerly held. As a result, by 1916, 17,500 million hectares (43,242,500 acres) of peasant freehold land had thus, under the Stolypin's reform plan, been unified by Government surveyors.

of the peasants into supporters of private property, and events might have taken another course. Unfortunately this development was cut short when Russia became involved in the World War, which for her ended in the Revolution. It is, however, no less a fact that when this upheaval occurred the country people—in those districts where the majority of the peasants had adopted the system of private property—were much more hesitant in forcibly seizing estates possessed by large landowners, or by the State itself. On the other hand, wherever peasant freeholds were small in number, private estates were appropriated and distributed without delay.

Stolypin's reform did not, however, produce all the results its author expected from it. It was, in fact, far from being completed at the time when the Russian Empire collapsed. Moreover, bold though he was, Stolypin did not go so far as to suppress the special juridical régime of the peasants. Even after the reform, the latter remained an "order" apart, with a distinct legal status. They continued, as before, to hold limited civil rights and to be restricted to the narrow frame of their own special autonomy, and under the authority of their own administration and courts. In order to prevent their eviction from the land, the law forbade them to sell to non-peasants the portions of communal land which had been handed over to them as private property. Stolypin's reform, at the stage of development it had reached at the time of the Revolution, had one vulnerable feature. As its author himself expressed it, he had "staked on the strong peasant." It was, above all, these "strong peasants"—the more enterprising and more thrifty and better off—who had withdrawn from the communal land and become independent freeholders. The plight of those who chose to remain behind became still worse than before the reform. To their old hatred of the landlord was now added hostility towards those of their fellow-peasants who had become private owners. Thus, the old longing for the partition of all private landed property became still more intense.

The economic and legal status of the peasants had given birth in the villages to "individuals deprived of rights and crowds which arrogated all rights to themselves." If the lawgiver had no respect for the peasants, these, in their turn, had no respect for the law. As a consequence the peasants, who had been very destructive during the agrarian disorders of the past, became still more lawless when the Revolution broke out.

Labour

In Russia, as elsewhere, the industrial workers were the most revolutionary element in the State. This social group was in origin the most recent of all. Urban workers began to grow rapidly in number with the development of industry, which was particularly marked from the end of the XIXth century. These workers, however, on the eve of the Revolution, did not exceed four million (exclusive of those in the transport and building industries).

From the end of the "eighties" Russian legislation began to protect labour against arbitrary treatment by industrials. Factory inspectors were appointed, who, on the whole, discharged their duties conscientiously and actively. Their functions consisted in supervising the observance of labour contracts and assuring the application of the factory laws and of hygienic regulations. In 1897 the first law was passed limiting the hours of labour for adult workers. After 1905 economic strikes, with certain exceptions, ceased to be illegal. Eventually, as from 1912, insurance of workers against sickness and accidents was introduced. Thus, in the field of labour legislation, Russia was entering upon the path which most Western European nations were following. On the eve of the Revolution, in fact, Russian legislation for the protection and security of the toilers was even more advanced than in certain of the great Western States, such as France, for instance. Until the downfall of the monarchy, however, the Government regarded with marked suspicion all working-class activity and organization. From the beginning of the XXth century wages and the workers' standard of comfort registered an appreciable improvement, though still remaining below those of the great industrial nations of the West.

The Bond Between Workmen and Peasants

As a social class, Russian urban workers differed notably from their Western European comrades, the "hereditary proletarians." Most of them had been born peasants, and had not lost contact with their native villages and the soil from which their relatives obtained their livelihood. Thanks to this, the needs of the poorer part of the peasants were keenly felt by the town workers. At the same time the peasants were fully aware of the needs of the town workers. This organic bond made it easier for revolutionary propaganda to

extend from the factory to the villages, and united the urban and rural masses in their struggle for a better future. The political inertia of the masses, against which, down to the end of the XIXth century, all the liberationalist dreams of the Russian intellectuals had always been shattered, gradually changed into a state of mind which was hostile to the established régime.

The masses have always, and everywhere, need of being guided by the intellectuals. For the Russian masses guidance was particularly necessary, owing to their lack of political experience. Only the Russian intellectuals could clothe in ideological form the ill-defined aspirations of the Russian masses. What, then, at this period, were the relations between the intellectuals and the masses?

In broaching this subject we arrive at one of the tragic contradictions which dragged down a vast and rapidly developing country into an abyss of disasters.

Western Culture Assimilated only by the Upper Classes

The rapid assimilation of Western culture, which began in Russia in the XVIIIth century under Peter the Great, did not progress at the same rhythm in the various strata of the population. In the middle of the XIXth century the *élite* of Russian society was in no way behind the *élite* of any of the Western countries, as far as its general level of culture was concerned. At the same time, even down to the eve of the Great War, the difference in the level of culture between the upper and the lower classes was in no other European country as distinctly marked as in Russia, in spite of the progress so far achieved in education.

After having emancipated the serfs, the Government made no real effort to educate them. For many years, indeed, the Education Department hampered the efforts in this direction of the municipalities and *Zemstvos* and various social organizations. This was one of the Government's greatest mistakes. At the beginning of the XIXth century, it is true, it modified its attitude towards education, but this change came too late. The minds of the generations who brought about the Revolution were formed at a period when the Government regarded education of the masses as a danger for the stability of the régime.[1]

1 The ignorance of the Russian masses, prior to the Revolution, must not be exaggerated. It is often believed that at that period the people stagnated in a state of crass ignorance, and that the Bolshevik Revolution for the first time gave

The Intellectuals

Among all the social categories of old Russia, the intellectuals appear to have possessed the most characteristically Russian features. It is not easy for the foreigner to comprehend their role in Russia and the influence they had on public opinion. The *intelligentzia* came from all classes of the nation, and comprised, above all, representatives of the liberal professions and of the brain-workers. They were much less homogeneous spiritually than were the creators of the great French cultural movement of the XVIIIth century. Russian intellectuals were at the head of the most widely varied political parties, from the moderate liberals to the most advanced Socialists. One spiritual bond united them: their common participation in the "Liberation movement," into which they threw all the energy of their idealism.

Beginning with Radischev, who suffered under Catherine II for his convictions, and continued by the *Decembrists*[1]—who, on the accession of Nicholas I, gave up their lives to the cause of liberty—they followed in turn the long road of sacrifice in their political and social service of the people. This devotion welded together their different elements and made of them a kind of "knights of humanity."

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Government regarded the intellectuals with undisguised suspicion. But the means employed to

them access to education. This view is totally unfounded. The figures already cited show the degree of progress made in regard to education in pre-revolutionary Russia. The new régime, therefore, received a rich heritage from its predecessor. This legacy helped the Russian educational system to resist the destructive attack of the Bolsheviks. Soviet statistics definitely show that of the contingent of young people which reached school age in 1914, 918 per 1,000 in the towns and 710 per 1,000 in the rural districts knew how to read and write. The return for the generation which reached school age in 1920 show that only 347 per 1,000 in the towns and 171 per 1,000 in the rural areas had acquired the same knowledge. Thus, during the first years of Bolshevik rule Russia was driven back to the state of things existing at the end of the XIXth century. It was only from 1930 onward that public education in Soviet Russia—from the quantitative point of view, and from that aspect solely—regained the situation which existed prior to the War.

1 On December 14, 1825, the date on which Nicholas I succeeded to the throne, and at the moment when the troops were taking the oath of fidelity, in the square before the Senate, in St. Petersburg, some young officers of the Guards, who, during the Napoleonic wars, had had the opportunity of assimilating the new political and social ideas of Western Europe, demanded the abolition of serfdom, the establishment of a régime of "enlightened liberty," and the restriction of the absolute power of the Monarch. Their initiative was sternly repressed by armed force; but the liberation movement, of which it was the first act, thenceforth continued uninterruptedly in Russia.

prevent them from establishing contact with the peasants and workers showed a lack of political foresight. These took the forms of restraining individual liberty of speech, of the Press and of public meetings, and of direct administrative repression.

In one way or another, however, "subversive" ideas filtered through into the masses, and this occurred in a way which rendered them particularly explosive. But while the Liberal wing of the intellectuals shrank from engaging in a revolutionary struggle, and hesitated openly to violate Government regulations, the Socialists regarded revolutionary action as their real mission. Political and social propaganda among the masses became to a great extent the monopoly of the Socialists. Among the various Socialist groups, the Populists (*Narodniki*), and above all the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*, placed their hopes in the peasants. The Marxists, on the contrary, counted on the town workers as the vanguard of the revolution. All the Socialist organizations carried on their propaganda by means of secret revolutionary societies, through which Socialist ideas reached the lower classes; and were adopted by them, without exercise of any critical sense, and as elementary truths. The clandestine meetings organized by these groups could form only semi-intellectual fanatics, who had barely assimilated the teachings of one or two Socialist books, the doctrines of which they accepted with blind fervour. Men of broad minds, capable of adapting themselves to unforeseen circumstances and of verifying their beliefs by experience, could not be expected to emerge from such sources.[1]

1 At the beginning of the XXth century the "semi-intellectuals," who formed a kind of lower stratum of the Russian intellectual class, constituted a numerous mass. Clandestine revolutionary circles were only one of the sources which furnished strength to these bogus intellectuals; the real importance of which began to become more and more considerable. The rise of this new factor was greatly fostered, during the decades preceding the War, by the multiplication of evening schools, and by popular publications designed to generalize knowledge. Gorki, in his novels, has sketched several characters typical of this new social category. Tormented by a burning—and, at bottom, naïve—desire to master absolute science and to devote themselves to great achievements, and devoid, moreover, of both real critical discipline or any practical experience of life, these semi-intellectuals became receptacles for all the explosive "advance-guard" tendencies exploited by "neo-Romanticism" which propagated spiritual snobbery, satanism, the cult of sexual freedom, and threats to "destroy" Pushkin, Raphael, etc. Minds of this character easily—although, after all, purely mechanically—drifted towards Positivism and Marxism. Recruits drawn from among these men gave themselves heart and soul to the revolution, in order to listen to its "music," to bring on "the revolution for the revolution," to attempt the most gigantic experiments. The Bolshevik revolution largely owed its destructive and gruesome

The intellectuals proper were themselves destitute of all political experience—and their Socialist wing most of all. They often showed themselves obstinately *doctrinaire* and lacked the sense of realities. This turn of mind was, to a great extent, due to the war which was being waged between them and the Government. They were inclined to champion their political and social ideas with extreme vigour, and even with intolerance, and to reject in advance, from sheer *parti pris*, everything which came from the opposite camp. Among some of these Russian intellectuals, Utopianism of ideas sometimes took a form plainly characteristic of political and social maximalism.[1] On the other hand, the intellectual was prone to idealize the sphere in which he was most interested. The Marxist, for example, idealized the town worker, and the Populist idealized the peasant.[2]

The Gap Between the Élite and the Masses

Although the cultured minority prided themselves on being attached to the people by historical and national bonds, there was nevertheless no effective contact between them. The uncultured masses considered themselves as alone constituting the nation. They regarded as "the masters" all those who had been penetrated by Western culture, both material and spiritual. This *élite* appeared to them as strangers, almost as foreigners. The survival of the social "orders" had contributed to maintaining this psychological separation. The feeling of aloofness was rooted all the more deeply in the popular mind from the circumstance that the demarcation between the cultured people and the uncultured, as well as between the privileged and the unprivileged, generally coincided with the distinction between the intellectual and the manual workers.[3]

character to men of this kind. Even before 1917 these "subterranean semi-intellectuals," very uncultured but extremely infatuated with themselves, had formed the lower *cadres* of the professional revolutionaries. Lenin used them to carry out his orders, and to popularize his "slogans" among the masses.

1 Tendency to hold out without compromise for the maximum of social and political demands.

2 A short survey of the development of political thought and parties before 1917 is given in the Appendix (see pp. 479–488).

3 During the revolutionary excesses of 1917–1918 a large number were shot merely because their hands were not calloused; while some averred enemies of the Communist régime escaped death because their hands bore traces of manual labour.

Infiltration of Socialism in the Masses

In default of being able to comprehend the intellectuals, the people assimilated in very crude fashion the Socialist ideas which were gradually permeating the masses. The sentiment that they were the victims of social injustice kindled in them a hatred of the régime, and of all who enjoyed a better state of existence. The peasant hated the landowners, the workman hated the employer, the manual labourers despised the intellectuals. Except, of course, for a handful of sincerely convinced Socialists, Socialism was reduced—in the minds of the peasants—to the seizure of the landed estates, and in those of the workmen to the seizure of the factories.

It is not surprising, therefore, that later on, in 1917, when the elemental forces of the masses became conscious of their power, the democratic intellectuals lacked the necessary authority to divert the tidal wave into restraining channels. This task proved much easier for the unscrupulous demagogues who inflamed the masses with their alluring battle-cries, shouted by "professional revolutionaries."

Thus, then, as shown by the preceding pages, there reigned in the rear, in 1914, when Russia entered the Great War, an atmosphere of profound discontent, which had been fanned for many years by revolutionary propaganda.

The Russification Policy

Another of Russia's problems at the outbreak of the War was the latent fermentation among the non-Russian nationalities incorporated in the Empire. Since the reign of Peter the Great, the Imperial Government had followed, in regard to these non-Russian or *allogeneous* nationalities, two entirely different lines of policy. The one was of Imperial and the other of national inspiration. The first of these, which showed great tolerance towards nationalistic particularisms, had predominated down to the accession of Alexander III. Except in the case of Poland—which had been partitioned between Prussia, Austria and Russia, and which had entertained in regard to the latter an undisguised hatred, many times manifested by a series of troubles and revolts—Russia had lived since towards the end of the XIXth century in an atmosphere of national peace. From 1880, however, a narrowly nationalist—or more exactly a "Great Russia"—policy had replaced the former Imperial one. The methods of Russification had provoked deep discontent among

the *allogeneous* nationalities. The first elections to the Duma demonstrated the spirit of opposition among all of them.

Nicholas II continued his father's nationalist policy, with the support of the Conservative majority which was formed in the Duma in 1907. Separatist tendencies developed and increased among the non-Russian peoples—above all in Poland and Finland.

The Tsarist régime proved itself particularly harsh towards Jews who followed the Israelite religion. In certain respects the law and the administration treated them scarcely better than in the Middle Ages. The Israelite population was limited in its rights, and notably in so far as admission to schools was concerned. They were prohibited from residing in towns and urban districts other than those within the "zone of residence" reserved for them in the south-west of European Russia.[1] This entirely abnormal situation of the Jews remained unmodified, even after the creation of the Duma. During the War, as the result of the retreat of the Russian armies, the interdiction prohibiting Jews from staying in the interior provinces of Russia was suppressed. But it was not until after the fall of the Monarchy that the Provisional Government gave up the former narrow nationalist policy and suppressed all national and religious restrictions.

The discontent of the masses, in itself alone, could not have brought about the triumph of the Revolution. Modern States have at their disposal sufficient technical means to enable them to overcome even an extensive rising. On the other hand, if the central power is to survive, in spite of popular hostility, it must be profoundly homogeneous and powerfully organized. This was exactly what Russia lacked when the war of 1914 broke out.

The Russian Constitutional Régime

It would be erroneous to assume that Russia remained an autocratic State down to 1917. As the result of the revolutionary troubles which shook the country in 1905, Russia had juridically become a constitutional monarchy by virtue of the Manifesto of Nicholas II on October 30 (17), 1905, and the organic laws promulgated May 10 (April 27th), 1906, inspired by Witte.

The Russian Constitution was certainly the least liberal of all the

1 In the rest of the territory of the Empire the right of domicile, so far as Jews were concerned, was recognized to those who had received superior education, or who held prominent positions in commerce or industry. These restrictions had no racial motive and did not apply to converted Jews.

constitutions which then existed in Europe. It had been modelled on constitutions of the non-Parliamentary type (such as those of Austria, Prussia, and Japan). It had borrowed from them all the provisions which maintained the independence of monarchal power in respect of national representation. It was a constitution which ignored both universal suffrage and parliamentarism, which make Ministers dependent on having the support of a majority in the representative Chambers. The new Chamber—the Duma—although elected by a large body of voters, emerged from a system of indirect and unequal voting, which had clearly favoured the representation of the well-to-do section of the population to the detriment of the masses. Besides, the Duma was greatly limited in some of its rights, specially in matters pertaining to the Budget.

In spite of its insufficiencies and its omissions, the new Russian Constitution inaugurated the reorganization of the whole political life of the country on fresh bases. The organic laws of 1906 clearly laid down that no law could henceforward be enacted without the assent of the legislative assemblies, and the sovereign could not, either too often or too openly, transgress against the new order. The liberty of the Press and of assemblies and unions was certainly more restricted than in Western democracies, but still it was recognized. In the Duma its members sharply criticized the Ministers and asked questions which they were obliged to answer. The most dissimilar political tendencies were represented in the Duma from supporters of autocracy to *Social-Democrats*-Bolsheviks, but owing to the electoral system the majority of the Assembly belonged to moderate Conservatism.[1]

1 The Russian Legislative Assemblies were two in number. In the Upper House, or Council of the Empire, one-half of the members was nominated by the Crown, and the other half elected by the local self-governing institutions (*Zemstvos*), and various social, corporative, and scientific bodies. The members of the Duma, or Lower House, were elected by the population under a very complicated system of limited and indirect franchise.

Not every citizen had electoral rights. Women were not electors. In order to have the vote—which was always secret—it was necessary to own real estate or any kind of commercial or industrial enterprise, however small, or simply to pay taxes. Besides, the electoral system comprised several degrees. In each province the electors were divided into the following categories: landowners, the urban population with larger income, the same population with small earnings, the peasantry, and finally—where industry was developed—the workmen. Each of these categories—except the small landowners and the peasants—was grouped into separate primaries which elected delegates, who in turn elected the members of the Duma. For the small landowners there were two grades of primary elections, and for the peasants even three such grades. Only in the seven great cities did

In short, the establishment of the Duma, was a very important historic step forward towards the winding up of the old Russian régime. The new Chamber was, at the same time, an essential element in the effort which still remained to be accomplished in order to achieve a more profound transformation of the country on the basis of political and civic liberty.

The cultural strata of the population accustomed gradually themselves to the new governmental régime, and could no longer even contemplate the possibility of any return to the old autocratic system. The representatives of the Conservative Parties—which had a majority in the Duma thanks to the unequal play of the voting system—had not in the past wished for the limitation of monarchal power. But since they had received the right to legislate, they rapidly realized the value of the new institution, and were now prepared to defend it. On the other hand, although the Duma had no roots in the mass of the people, its bonds with the "bourgeois" classes[1] drew closer and closer. The greater part of the bureaucracy was also inclined to collaborate with the new Parliament, and even the Army was looking up to it.

Prospects of Pacific Evolution

The democratic elements, of course, had more than one reason for being discontented with the new régime. In their eyes the electoral method was entirely defective, and administrative procedure still retained many of the practices of the old autocracy. The institution of "orders" survived, and from their point of view constituted an obvious anachronism.

direct voting exist, but here also the well-to-do electors and those of lesser means voted separately, being grouped into two electoral colleges.

Although voting qualification was based on a certain minimum of means of livelihood, this minimum was so low that nearly all the adult males may be said to have enjoyed voting rights prior to 1917. However, the grouping of the various categories of electors into primaries was so arranged, in regard to the number of delegates to be elected by each group, that the wealthier classes, and especially the representatives of the great landowners, were given a proportionately greater influence in the Duma, which was consequently given a more conservative—that is moderate—tendency than would have been the case had direct voting been generalized. The reform of the electoral system in 1907 still accentuated the disproportion, by increasing the number of delegates elected in the primaries by the big landowners and the wealthier urban population as compared with the number of delegates elected by the other categories of electors.

1 Throughout this book the term "bourgeois" is used in the economic sense. In other words, to designate all those who possess some kind of capital.

Nevertheless, if the Russia of 1914 were compared with what it had been ten years earlier, it was evident that the country was already undergoing complete transformation, and in political matters was going through an evolution similar to that which was occurring in the economic and cultural domains. The decade which had elapsed since the Russian people achieved some measure of liberty, had marked a great release of energy and resulted in an impressive advance. In all domains the nation was showing unquestionable signs of vigorous and healthy growth.

On the whole, in spite of the increase of revolutionary tendencies among the masses, the country could look forward to a period of peaceful internal evolution.

The "Mystic" of Imperial Power

The War, however, ruined this prospect, all the more so as the evolution of the country was compromised by the fact that the supreme power was in the hands of a man like Nicholas II. Actuated by ardent patriotism, and endowed with high moral qualities, the ill-fated Emperor had, unfortunately, certain traits of character which are calamitous in a modern sovereign.

Nicholas II, who under pressure of the Revolution of 1905 had willingly limited his power, would not draw the logical consequences of that act. Now that so many documents—letters and private diaries and the personal testimony of persons who were in close relations with him—have become available, it is possible to establish the moral picture of the last Russian monarch and to explain certain of his acts which, at the time, seemed to be absolutely incomprehensible.

Like his father, Nicholas II was profoundly convinced of the Divine origin of autocratic power. That creed had been inculcated in him from his childhood, and was fostered by his immediate entourage. No formal limitation of his power—even after he had endorsed this by his own signature—could, in truth, really diminish his belief in his Divine mission. The Tsar's sincere conviction was that, having placed him on the throne, God directed his will and his thoughts for the good of the country. His duty was to serve the nation, and assume the entire responsibility for his acts before the Almighty alone.

It was for this reason that, having in 1905 become a constitutional monarch and accepted the limitation of his power, Nicholas II

nevertheless retained the old title of "Autocrat of All the Russias." He continued to give to this formula its undiminished significance. The mysticism of autocracy held him under its spell throughout the whole of his reign. And, well as he understood that, in the current State affairs, he must act in accordance with the written law, the Tsar mentally reserved for himself the right to violate that law in exceptional circumstances when his conscience commanded it by reason of that Divine power.

The Empress and her Influence on the Tsar

Such a psychology in a constitutional monarch was certainly fraught with danger for the State, but the weak and irresolute character of the Tsar, who allowed himself to be easily influenced, still further added to the peril. The person who exercised the greatest ascendancy over the sovereign was the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna—authoritative and *exalté*, with shattered nerves. After having been converted to the Greek Orthodox faith, the Empress adopted all its medieval mysticism. She believed in miraculous *icons* and in sacred relics, in dreams and prophecies, in the wisdom of "men of God," in hermits, pilgrims, *illuminati*, visionaries, and innocents. And, of course, she believed sincerely and profoundly in the Divine origin of her husband's power.

Little versed in questions of constitutional law, the Empress pictured to herself the leadership of State affairs in the most simple manner. To her mind Divine Providence directed the will of her husband, the Tsar and autocrat. Every desire of the autocrat was sacred. Every one of his orders must be executed. He had the right to violate no matter what law, for his will alone was law. The Ministers were his servants. Those who obeyed him unquestioningly were good servants, who must be retained. The bad ones must be dismissed. The Empress was convinced that the Orthodox Russian people loved their Tsar, who had been elected by God to ensure their peace and happiness. But even among his favoured subjects there were wicked persons, enemies of the Tsar and of autocracy, who were consequently enemies of Russia and of the Russian people. To this detestable category belonged a great proportion of the intellectual class. Through them subversion and sedition had been able to filter into local governmental institutions, into the Duma, and the Council of the Empire. Their destructive ideas had penetrated into the bureaucracy, and even into Court circles. The

Tsar must be stern and unyielding with such people, she constantly urged, in order to preserve the Imperial Power and the nation itself from their intrigues.

The state of mind of the Emperor and Empress tended more and more towards mysticism in the course of a married life of exceptional affection and mutual confidence. The trials they underwent—like the Khodynka catastrophe, with its thousands of victims, during the Coronation celebrations; the Russian defeat in the war with Japan, and above all the incurable malady of their only son—only accentuated this tendency. The primitive and active mysticism of the authoritative Empress eventually dominated the more abstract mystical leanings of her husband.

Struggle Over the Constitution

While the governing class in Russia was becoming accustomed to the representative system, the monarch himself was withdrawing more and more from constitutionalism. Eventually he violated the spirit of the Constitution.

During the years preceding the Revolution of 1917 a veritable struggle took place in defence of the new order of things. This did not occur between the Imperial Power and the people, but in the heart of the governmental system itself. At one time the conflict was between the Government and the Duma; at another in the Government itself, between Ministers; or, again, between the majority of the Government and the sovereign, who was entirely under the influence of the Empress and other politically irresponsible persons.

The weak and irresolute character of Nicholas II gave the advantage to each of the parties in turn. But the monarch himself, who had endowed Russia with her Constitution, and whose duty it was to defend it, constantly gave his support to its enemies and thus contributed to the downfall of the régime which he had himself accepted.

Thanks to the speeches in the Duma and the comparative freedom of the Press, the masses ended by realizing the vacillations of the Government, and its prestige sank from year to year.

The Influence of Rasputin

The prestige of the Government was definitely ruined by the appearance of the sinister figure of Rasputin in the background of the Imperial Palace. The Empress, in her mystical zeal, had already

previously welcomed other adventurers who claimed to be "men of God," but the prophets and miracle-workers who had been seen there before Rasputin had kept almost entirely aloof from political matters. Rasputin himself—whose mysterious gift of arresting the haemorrhages specific to the malady from which the young heir to the throne suffered, had profoundly impressed the imagination of the Empress—contented himself at first with exercising religious influence over her. Her mother's heart relied on him to save her son, pronounced incurable by the doctors. She gradually came to consider Rasputin as a messenger sent from heaven for Russia's salvation. Eventually she was to make a practice of consulting him on all the affairs of the State.

This illiterate and drunken *muzhik*, whose life of debauch was believed by everybody except the Empress, became the occult instrument of a group of intriguers to such an extent that eventually all the Ministers of the Imperial Government practically owed their nomination to his influence. Whereas, formerly, the ability and the political views of candidates for the highest posts in the State had determined their nominations, the condition now guiding their choices was that they "loved Our Friend" (to quote an expression used by the Empress in her letters to her husband).

The influence of Rasputin on the affairs of the State began about three years before the Great War. That period sufficed to bring discredit on the Imperial Power, and to destroy the last shreds of the Emperor's prestige with the masses.

Such was the situation of Russia at the outbreak of the war in 1914.

Deficient Army Organization

The outburst of patriotic fervour which animated all classes of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the War, was unable to arrest the decomposition of the Imperial Power. It very soon became manifest that Russia was badly prepared for war. The organization of the army revealed itself as gravely inefficient. The supplies and medical services were obviously insufficient; but the worst shortcomings were found in the supply of armaments and munitions. If municipal organizations, local institutions, and private initiative had not come to the rescue, from the very outbreak of hostilities, the results of this situation would have been still more disastrous than they were.

The Tannenberg defeat and the heavy losses sustained in the retreat from the Carpathians by the troops without arms, shocked the army and the whole nation, and the responsibility for the reverses was in a great measure ascribed to the Government. Rumours of treachery in Government circles began to circulate. The War Minister, General Sukhomlinov, who had been a special protégé of Rasputin, was even suspected of treasonable intelligence with the enemy.

Final Collapse of Imperial Power

The conduct of public affairs became constantly worse. Within the Government itself internal strife continued. The influence of Rasputin ceaselessly increased. Ministers succeeded each other with startling rapidity. The more competent of them were dismissed[1] and replaced by worthless men who had been called to high office by chance alone.[2] A power thus evidently shaken was not in a position to surmount the serious difficulties resulting from the war. Transportation was becoming disorganized and the revictualling of towns difficult. Desertions were increasingly large. From the middle of 1915, and still more in 1916, many well-informed people already realized that revolution was inevitable. The Government, which formerly had at least a small amount of support from Conservative circles, found itself isolated from the whole of the country. All sincere patriots, whatever their political opinions, had become hostile to it. In fact, there was no longer any Government.

Efforts to Prevent a Revolution

Those who foresaw the danger of a revolution in war-time did their utmost to stave off such a calamity. Several prominent men who had personal access to the Tsar repeatedly attempted to persuade him of the vital necessity of severing relations with Rasputin and of forming a Government having the confidence of the Duma and the Army. The president of the Duma, high officials of the Court, some

1 Among the Ministers then discharged were the highly respected Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonov; the capable Minister of Agriculture, Krivoshein; and the enlightened Minister of Education, Count P. Ignatiev.

2 Public opinion was particularly upset by the appointment of such an incapable and little esteemed man as Sturmer, first as Prime Minister and later, in addition, as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Another very unfortunate choice was the nomination as Minister for the Interior of a former Vice-President of the Duma, Protopopov, who was beginning to show signs of mental derangement.

of the Grand Dukes themselves, endeavoured in vain to convince the Emperor of the desperate nature of the situation.

The murder of Rasputin, which occurred at the end of 1916, brought no modification to the chaotic situation. Eventually, the idea of averting a catastrophe by means of a palace *coup d'état* was mooted among the Conservative groups. It was already too late for such a step. . . .

The bewildered Government faced an armed and hostile nation. The least untoward incident might bring about its collapse. It was doomed.

A synopsis of the development of Russian political thought and parties before the Revolution of 1917 is given in an Appendix.

CHAPTER II

The Revolution of 1917

Suddenness of the Revolution

The rapidity with which the Imperial régime collapsed in 1917 surprised even observers who saw the future dark with inevitable perturbations and considered that the monarchy would be held largely responsible for them.

As early as August 1915 the internal difficulties and serious military complexities facing the country had caused within the Duma the formation of a "Progressive Bloc," comprising the majority of the non-Socialist deputies, with the exception of those of the extreme Right. The Bloc constantly urged the creation of a Ministry enjoying general confidence. It regarded such a concession to public opinion as the sole means of successfully helping the State out of its perilous situation, and of conducting the armies to victory. The Government obstinately refused to listen to the stern warnings of the Bloc, thereby throwing its members into increasing opposition.

Still, up to the Revolution of 1917, all the advanced Liberals and moderate Conservatives remained faithful to the principles which had led them to unite. Convinced and unanimous partisans of monarchy, they did their best to prevent the explosion of elementary forces. They had never been in favour of a revolution, which they dreaded in the middle of the war. In fact, they were conscious that an uprising, even were it suppressed, would deal a fatal blow to the country's powers of resistance. As to the still more advanced parties, the Socialists, they had at the time of the declaration of war committed themselves by a great majority to support national defence, and did not wish to stand in the way of Russia's being among the victors at the end of the world conflict.[1] Besides, like everybody,

1 Even the Russian Socialists living abroad in exile adhered, at the very beginning of the war, to the national defence through their authorized representatives. Among them were the famous anarchist, Prince P. A. Kropotkin, and the father of Russian Marxism, G. V. Plekhanov. The working classes reacted

they believed the Government to be much stronger than it subsequently proved to be. This was, for instance, the attitude of Chkheidze, a *Social-Democrat* and a member of the Duma, who became later on the president of that "Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies"[1] which came into being in the first days of the Revolution, and greatly contributed to spread and intensify its action. As late as in January 1917 he tried to dissuade his "comrades" from all street demonstrations: "At the present hour," he said, "the Revolution has no chance of success. I know that the police is trying to incite the workers to street manifestations, in order to inflict on them a crushing defeat."

Such warnings were not without reason. At the beginning of 1917 popular discontent had reached boiling point throughout the whole country, and threatened to turn into street manifestations. In a confidential report of the St. Petersburg section of the Government secret police (the *Okhrana*), dated January 31, 1917, a true though incomplete description is given of the revolutionary excitement at that period both in the capital and in Moscow. "The state of mind," the report says, "is highly alarming. The most fantastic rumours are circulated among the public concerning the reactionary measures the Government is said to be contemplating, as well as about the acts of violence and the subversive designs planned by those hostile

in the same manner. This was shown by the fact that all strikes ceased spontaneously at the declaration of war; whereas a few days earlier on the arrival of the President of the French Republic, M. Raymond Poincaré, at St. Petersburg, there were numerous strikers in the city.

1 The Assembly, known by the name of Soviet, was not an entirely new creation of the men of 1917. It was inspired by a preceding Assembly, which had left a lasting memory among the working classes. This first Soviet met in St. Petersburg on October 26, 1905, a few days before the publication of the manifesto granting Russia representative institutions. On the same model Soviets were formed in all large provincial towns. By far exceeding them in importance, the St. Petersburg Soviet became the centre of the revolutionary movement. This Soviet consisted of delegates from the principal works and factories, from trade unions, and from the Socialist Parties. Deputies from forty works and factories attended the first sitting. By the middle of November 1905 there were already five hundred and sixty-two representatives of one hundred and forty-seven works and factories, thirty-four representatives of workshops, and sixteen delegates from trade unions. This Soviet was short-lived. The Government, strengthened by the concessions it had just made to "bourgeois" democracy, was able to arrest as early as December 16, 1905, all the members of the Soviet. This was the signal for the armed rising of the workmen in Moscow, which was quickly put down by military intervention.

"Soviet" is the Russian equivalent of the English word "Council."

to it. Everybody is awaiting extraordinary happenings and action on both sides."

Thus the situation at the beginning of 1917 was extremely complex and tense.

It is an open question whether at that time the Imperial Government might still have been able to avert the threatened catastrophe by sincere and courageous concessions to public feeling. This point is, however, purely academical, as the sovereign and his advisers totally lacked the will to grasp the real situation and to undertake the indispensable reforms. By short-sighted policy the Government fostered revolution and isolated itself from the people. In the long run, many of the most convinced and most conservative monarchists reluctantly reached the conclusion that a "palace revolution" was the only way to bring a dangerous situation to an end, to prevent revolutionary troubles, and to pursue the war to a finish in faithful co-operation with Russia's allies.

Among these monarchists was A. I. Guchkov, former President of the Third Duma and leader of the moderate wing of the Russian Liberals, a man who never refused his support to the Government when Stolypin was at its head. Energetic by nature, Guchkov did not content himself with thinking or talking of a palace revolution, but set himself to prepare it. "If the popular revolution had not occurred first," he writes in his *Memoirs*, "our plan would certainly have been carried out. . . As for myself, I was so deeply convinced that a palace *coup d'état* was the sole means of saving Russia, at the same time as the dynasty, that I was ready to stake my life on it. I have always been, still am, and shall die a monarchist; but at no moment of my political activity was I so firmly convinced of serving the cause of the monarchy as when I was plotting against Nicholas II."[1]

1 Before the High Commission of Inquiry, appointed by the Provisional Government to investigate the acts of the principal agents of the Imperial Government, A. I. Guchkov declared a short time before the Bolshevik victory of November 1917 that the calamities which fell on Russia after the Revolution were due to the fact that "the Russian people, in the person of its governing class, had not sufficiently understood how necessary the reorganization of the régime had become, and had not taken the direction of it. It thus abandoned to blind forces, evolving outside of any definite plan, the task of accomplishing this painful operation." Faithful to this thought, Guchkov went back to it in his above-mentioned *Memoirs*, written in exile in 1935, a year before his death: "At the present hour," he wrote, "I persist in my profound conviction that the evils which overwhelmed her might have been spared to Russia if we had had time to accomplish the *coup d'état* which we projected."

Bolshevik Tactics before the Revolution

Whether advanced or moderate, the Russian Liberals remained faithful to the monarchist principle until the outbreak of the Revolution, which they sought to prevent by all possible means. In their political programme, the *Social-Democrats*, like the *Revolutionary-Socialists*, had decided, from the creation of their respective parties, in favour of a democratic republic; and yet, under war conditions, the representatives of Socialist thought had declared themselves against revolutionary action by the masses, although their reasons for their attitude were quite different from those of the Liberals.

There existed, nevertheless, one Socialist faction which sought to exploit, for revolutionary aims, all the difficulties created by the war. This tendency in Russia was incarnated in the Bolsheviks.

According to their own assertions, "the Bolshevik Party was the only one to remain faithful to the principle of the class war, and to the flag of proletarian internationalism, in the midst of universal drunken jingoism."[1] The leader of this party, V. I. Lenin, had drawn up, as far back as September 1914, the theses which formed the basis of the "Bolshevik Manifesto on Imperialist War." "We observe with a feeling of profound bitterness," this text says, "that the attitude of the Socialist Parties of the different European countries, and the conduct of their leaders—above all in Germany—borders on pure and simple treason to the Socialist cause. . . The transformation of the present Imperialist war into civil war constitutes the only real proletarian watchword." This manifesto—in accord, in this, with the thesis of Lenin—takes its stand resolutely on the side of "defeatism," and jeers at the national defence platform of the other Russian Socialist Parties which it calls Liberal Jingoist—in a word "bourgeois." "In Russia," we read in this proclamation, "jingoism has completely conquered the bourgeois Liberals, and a part of the Populists, and even as far as the *Socialists-Revolutionaries* and the *Social-Democrats* of the Right. But for us, Russian *Social-Democrats*, there can be no doubt: from the point of view of the workers' class, and of the toiling masses of all the Russian peoples, the defeat of the Tsarist autocracy would be the least evil."[2]

1 See the preface to *Manifesto on Imperialist War* in the book *The Pan-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) in the resolutions and the decisions of its Congresses and Conferences and of the plenary sessions of its Central Committee*, Part 1, 1936 Edition.

2 In 1914 Lenin still believed that a Socialist revolution was impossible in Russia. Therefore, although expecting that the "Imperialistic war" would develop into civil war, he thought that the latter should not seek to introduce Socialism

Since before the Revolution of 1917, Bolshevik propaganda succeeded in winning over the masses of Russian workers, and even to produce tangible effects. On March 8, 1917, disorders, as yet not serious, took place in the streets of St. Petersburg. They were provoked by defective food supplies, due to the disorganization of the transportation system. The crowd, composed chiefly of workmen's wives and boys, first raided bakeries and grocers' shops and then marched in procession through streets to cries of "Bread! Bread!" Similar manifestations took place on March 9th and 10th, with the difference that on these occasions strikers also took part, and that these simple protests were superseded by demands of a definitely political nature. Red flags floated above the crowd, bearing such inscriptions as "Down with War!" "Down with Autocracy!" Later, during the course of 1917, the Bolsheviks often made use of these slogans as proofs of the spontaneous and instinctive bolshevization of the masses, but nobody had any doubt as to their real origin. Moreover, after their victory in November, the Bolsheviks did not hesitate to emphasize, in their official publications, the intense agitation which they had provoked among the St. Petersburg working people during the days immediately preceding the revolution of March 1917.[1]

As a matter of fact the Bolsheviks, during the course of those days, were far from exercising a predominant influence over the masses. From the beginning of February 1917, for example, they busied themselves with distributing in certain factories anonymous tracts

in Russia, but pursue more moderate aims. In the above-mentioned manifesto he pointed out that Russia being a very backward country, and not yet having accomplished its bourgeois revolution, its transformation on democratic lines must limit itself to three fundamental points: "the establishment of a democratic republic (in which equality of rights and full liberty of self-determination would be granted to all nationalities), confiscation of the estates of the big landowners, and application of the eight-hour day. On the other hand, the war has in all advanced countries brought to the front the appeal to a Socialist revolution."

As a matter of fact, exactly the contrary occurred. The "advanced countries" have refrained from bringing about a Socialist revolution, and it has been in "backward" Russia that "Socialism" has been suddenly implanted, first by the hand of Lenin, and afterwards by that of Stalin.

1 See V. Avdeiev's *The Revolution of 1917: Chronicle of the Events*, vol. I, in the Communist Party publications. This author cites, among others, the proclamation issued by the Bolsheviks on March 10th, which ended thus: "The struggle is before us! But certain victory awaits us! Everybody under the red flags of the Revolution! Down with Tsarist autocracy! Long live the Democratic Republic! Down with War! Long live the Brotherhood of the Workers! Long live the Socialist International!"

which criticized the policy of the Government and called on the workers to take part in a manifestation before the Tauride Palace, the seat of the Duma, on February 27th, the day of the opening of the new session of the Chamber, and to demand the immediate formation of a provisional government. Again, some days later, the St. Petersburg Bolshevik Committee launched in its own name an appeal to a general strike and street demonstrations. This movement was to have begun on February 27th, but the "national defence" Socialists and the leaders of the "Progressive Bloc" succeeded in persuading the workers not to associate themselves with such a risky attempt.

Events soon demonstrated, however, that if the masses of the capital cheered from time to time the slogans flashed upon them, they escaped more and more from all guiding or restraining influence, no matter from where it came. The popular revolution, which the majority of the Russian politicians were seeking by every means —and for various reasons—to prevent, sprang from the spontaneous disorders caused by deficiency in food supplies.

First Days of the Revolution

Having begun on March 8th, these disorders became worse from day to day. The police soon found they were no longer able to control the movement. On the other hand, the troops sent to support them showed themselves very little inclined to march against the people. At first, it is true, the soldiers obeyed orders and fired a few rounds, but already, on March 11th, some of the detachments were openly fraternizing with the manifestants. Even the Cossacks, traditional specialists in repressing disorders, refused to disperse the crowds. One of the Cossack patrols actually attacked a body of police who were firing on the people and put them to flight. In the afternoon a company of the Pavlovski Regiment of the Imperial Guard revolted.[1]

Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, frightened by the situation, sent the following telegram to the Emperor, who, since September 1915, had been exercising the high command of the

1 In St. Petersburg there were large numbers of reserve men recently mobilized, who were being trained before joining their regiments on the front. As there were not enough officers and corporals to supervise them, their discipline and morale were very poor. It had been a great mistake on the part of the Imperial Government to have let accumulate in the capital such explosive elements.

armies in the field, and was then at his headquarters at the front: "Situation serious. Anarchy reigns in the capital. Government powerless. Transports of food supplies and combustibles entirely disorganized. Growing general discontent. Disorderly firing in the streets. Troops firing on each other. Indispensable to charge a man enjoying the confidence of the country with the constitution of a new Government. All hesitation impossible. The least delay may be fatal. I pray to God that at this hour the responsibility will not fall on the Monarch." Rodzianko at the same time addressed a copy of this telegram to all the generals in command of armies, asking them to support his suggestion. They complied with this request and telegraphed to the Tsar.

All the appeals to the sovereign, however, were of no avail. During these hours heavy with the most serious responsibilities, Nicholas II persisted in seeking a solution solely in repressive measures. In this he acted in accord with the Empress, who was ceaselessly sending him advice by letter and by telegram. "I hope," she wrote, among other counsels, "that you will end by hanging this Kerensky of the Duma. . . . This must be done—martial law in time of war—and it will furnish an example. Everybody is placing their hope in you, and I beg of you to give proofs of firmness."[1] Completely in agreement with the Tsarina, Nicholas II saw the source of the revolutionary contamination in the speeches delivered in the Duma by the opposition members. On March 10th he had ordered General Khabalov to "put an end, from to-morrow, to these inadmissible disorders in the capital, at the height of the war against Germany and Austria." The following day he supplemented these orders by sending to Rodzianko, in answer to his alarming telegram, a decree suspending the Legislative Chambers for a period of two months.

March 12, 1917

On the morning of the 12th, Rodzianko again telegraphed to the Tsar: "Situation worse. Must act urgently, for to-morrow will be too late. The last hour has come which will decide the destinies of the country and the dynasty." This telegram brought no reply.

Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg, events were taking a more and more decisive turn. At the very moment when the deputies were assembling at the Tauride Palace, to hear the reading of the proroga-

1 From the text published in the Red Archive, vol. 4, 1923.

tion decree—although there was no connection between the two events—a mutiny broke out at the barracks occupied by one of the infantry regiments of the Guards. In the afternoon, the arsenal had been seized and occupied by some of the mutinous troops; the Law Courts and the headquarters of the *Okhrana* (secret or political police) were in flames; rifle fire was crackling round the police stations, which were besieged by the crowds. In face of all this the civil and military forces were reduced to impotence. After long hesitation, the Duma felt obliged to constitute a provisional committee "with the object of restoring order and entering into contact with the men and the groups connected with the uprising." Thus, by the force of circumstances, and in an entirely unforeseen manner, the Duma found itself at the centre of revolutionary events.

By this time even the Ministers must have realized that the old régime was being overthrown. Towards six o'clock in the evening Prince Galitzin, the President of the Ministerial Council, telegraphed to Army Headquarters at the front that the Government was no longer able to cope with the situation. He suggested that the Tsar should immediately appoint a new Prime Minister who would enjoy the public confidence, and entrust him with forming a constitutional Cabinet. The Tsar's reply soon came. It said: "I have given to the chief of my General Staff orders for the nomination of a military governor of St. Petersburg, who will have to leave immediately for the capital. Also for the dispatch of troops. I confer upon you personally full powers over the civil administration. As to the composition of the Ministry, I consider it inadmissible to modify it, in the present circumstances.—NICHOLAS."

March 12th (February 27th old style) is regarded as the first day of the Russian Revolution of 1917, because it was on that day that "the Government of His Imperial Majesty" *de facto* ceased to exist. It was replaced by new institutions of semi-revolutionary and even frankly revolutionary origins. One of these was the "Provisional Committee of the Duma." Legally speaking, its authority rested on a weak foundation, if only because the Duma had been suspended by the monarch. On the other hand, some hours before the creation of this parliamentary committee, the representatives of organized labour, the co-operative associations and the Socialist Parties, as well as the deputies belonging to the latter, held a meeting in the palace of the Duma and constituted a "Provisional Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workmen's Deputies." This executive com-

mittee at once devoted itself to organizing the Revolution. It was the first organization to take such practical measures as the occupation by the troops of the principal institutions of the capital, and the provisioning of the revolted garrison. It also organized the election of delegates by the factory workers and the soldiers in the St. Petersburg regiments and created the "Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies." This assembly, in which all the revolutionary forces were represented, was destined to play a leading part in coming events.

The executive committee of the Soviet entered into contact with the Provisional Committee of the Duma. While the committee of the Soviet left to the committee of the Duma the task of appointing commissioners for all the Government departments, the former retained in its hands the key-posts, ensuring the effective control over the capital. The executive committee entrusted the supervision of each quarter of the capital to a reliable commissioner, who had the obligation to make daily reports. It also exercised effective command of the troops through the delegates elected by the regiments. Thus, from the very first days of the Revolution, two centres of revolutionary power, independent of each other, appeared in St. Petersburg.

The events occurring in the capital had an immediate repercussion all over the country, and the officials of the old Government everywhere were compelled to resign in favour of local advanced elements put forward by public opinion. Moscow was the first other great centre to rally to the Revolution. On its side, the High Command of the Army voiced the opinion (as expressed in a telegram sent on March 14, 1917, by General Brussilov to the Minister of the Court) that "during a foreign war like the present one, it is absolutely forbidden to think of the possibility of a civil war, for this would be equivalent to a certain defeat of our armies." Nicholas II then left field headquarters for Tsarskoie Selo, near St. Petersburg, where his family was then staying. The Imperial train was stopped, however, at Dno and obliged to proceed in the direction of Pskov, where the headquarters for the north-western front were situated.

Constitution of the Provisional Government

Revolutionary exaltation constantly grew. The mere mention of the word "monarchy" began to provoke outbursts of anger in the crowds. Confronted with this state of things, the Duma's Provisional

Committee considered the problem of forming a Provisional Government. To this effect, it entered into *pourparlers* with the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and in accordance with the authorized representatives of the latter, came to a decision regarding the composition of the Provisional Government.[1] The latter was formed and entered into function on March 14, 1917.[2]

The news of the establishment of the Provisional Government was joyously received by the country. This enthusiasm was so remarkable that it led some members of the new Government into believing that the latter needed no other support.

Abdication of the Tsar

Before any kind of governmental work could be undertaken, the problem of the supreme power had necessarily to be solved. Already, on March 15th, the Provisional Committee of the Duma had commissioned Guchkov and Shoulgin to obtain the abdication of Nicholas II in favour of his son, Alexis, and the appointment of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, brother of the Tsar, as regent. On his side, the President of the Duma considered it his sacred duty to recommend this solution as the only one that would enable Russia to continue the war. He put forward this solution in a communication to General Alexeiev, the head of the General Staff at the General Headquarters and the closest collaborator of the

1 In the Russian newspapers of March 18, 1917, the following declaration by Kerensky, a member of the Provisional Government, is to be found: "I declare publicly that the new Provisional Government has assumed office with the agreement of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies."

2 The Provisional Government was headed by Prince G. E. Lvov, the president of the Pan-Russian Union of *Zemstvos* and municipalities, and a member of the Progressive Bloc in the Duma. In his person the elements representing public opinion took the place of the high dignitaries who had hitherto directed the administration of the country. The ministerial portfolios were mainly distributed among the members of the Progressive Bloc: Vladimir Lvov, Godnev, Konovalov, Miliukov, Shingarev, and Nekrasov. Three of the Ministers did not belong to the Duma: Guchkov, the most prominent of the Moderate Liberals (*Octobrists*) and a member of the Council of Empire, who became War Minister; Tereschenko, a representative of the industrial circles, who took part in all the clandestine conferences before the Revolution; Manuilov, a former professor at Moscow University, whose liberalism, judged excessive by the Tsarist Government, had cost him his professorial chair. Lastly, there was Kerensky, a member of the Labourist (*Trudoviki*) group in the Duma and of the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party, who accepted the portfolio of Minister for Justice in spite of the refusal of the Socialist Parties to participate in this Ministry of "bourgeois revolution." To Kerensky fell the task of being the link between this first Cabinet of the Provisional Government and the Socialist elements.

Tsar in the high command of armies in the field. General Alexeiev and the army commanders, Generals Ruski, Brussilov, and Evert, as well as the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaievich, in command on the Caucasian front, also declared themselves in favour of abdication. In face of this unanimous agreement Nicholas II was compelled to submit. At the moment of signing his abdication, however, he made a change of major importance in the text prepared for him. Instead of renouncing the throne in his own name only, he also abdicated in the name of his son, and nominated his brother, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, as his successor. This abdication in the name of the heir presumptive was contrary to the fundamental laws of the Russian monarchy, and the validity of the act of abdication itself thus became juridically questionable.

Monarchy or Republic?

The increasing revolutionary ardour, however, caused the elements of the left to no longer attach any great importance to the maintenance of an uninterrupted juridic continuity between the old régime and the new. The Socialist Parties, the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and even a portion of the *Constitutional-Democratic* Party, had already clearly pronounced themselves in favour of a republic. This induced many convinced partisans of a constitutional monarchy to think that, in the existing circumstances, any attempt to defend the monarchy might lead to a spontaneous explosion of popular anger, the destructive effects of which would be uncalculable. Fate willed it that the leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Duma, P. N. Miliukov, should be one of the last to fight gallantly for the maintenance of the monarchial principle. He saw in it a purely psychological organizing force which it was particularly important to preserve, at this historical juncture, when all the barriers stemming the blind violence of the crowd were being broken down.[1]

1 Miliukov, from the platform of the Duma, had formerly denounced the evils of the old régime, and had insisted that the Government must abandon its reactionary and anti-constitutional policy. His speeches had given more than one blow to the old régime. His indictment of the Government on November 14, 1916, each passage of which ended with the question: "Is it stupidity? Or is it treason?" was considered by many people—among his friends as well as among his adversaries—as the preface to the Revolution. All Miliukov's speeches in the Duma, however, represented efforts on his part to prevent a revolution. The leader of the Liberal Opposition sought to trace the path which might lead the

The Republic

On March 16th, a conference was held at the palace of the Grand Duke Michael. Kerensky, Nekrasov, and Rodzianko pointed out the dangerous consequences which would ensue should the Grand Duke be immediately proclaimed Emperor. The Grand Duke yielded to their arguments, and declared that he was not prepared to accept the throne unless it were offered to him by a Constituent Assembly to be called at a later date. Under the circumstances, this refusal, conditional as it was, meant in fact the establishment of a republic.

Programme of the Provisional Government

On March 19th the Provisional Government published its political programme. It declared, at the outset, its intention to continue the war until complete victory was attained, and "to remain faithful to the allies, as well as to the treaties," signed by the old Government.[1] On the other hand, the Government pledged itself to lead the country as soon as possible to a constituent assembly and to introduce universal suffrage in the election of the self-governing local bodies. Finally, the declaration proclaimed a general political amnesty, and authorized all those who had been deported by the old régime to return to their homes "with all due honours" for their services in the cause of the Revolution. In the execution of its programme the Provisional Government promul-

Government to safety. He remained true to his ideas in the beginning of the revolution, when he insisted on his views at the first sitting of the Provisional Government, when he faced the tumultuous crowds in the public meetings in the Tauride Palace, as well as when, on the morning of March 16th, the Provisional Committee of the Duma and the Ministers of the Provisional Government negotiated with the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich. As Shulgin remarks in his *Memoirs*, Miliukov "never ceased to strike at the same point with all the stubbornness of a woodpecker," and to demonstrate the necessity of conserving the monarchy for the good of Russia and for safeguarding the country against tragic evils that could not otherwise be avoided. The opposite point of view was pleaded before the Grand Duke Michael by Kerensky and Nekrasov, who insisted that if he accepted the crown he would precipitate the country into chaos which would render all constructive work impossible. Rodzianko, President of the Duma, added that it would not be possible to answer for the life of the Grand Duke if he accepted the throne abandoned by the Tsar.

1 These pledges were intentionally placed at the beginning of the declaration in order to calm the anxiety which arose during the last months of the old régime, when many people wondered whether the reactionary Government headed by Sturmer was not tending, under the influence of irresponsible persons, towards a separate peace with Germany.

gated during the two following months a series of new laws, which fulfilled the ardent desires of several generations of adherents to the Russian liberation movement.[1]

First Days' Enthusiasm

The overflowing enthusiasm of the first few days of the Revolution made many people believe that the Provisional Government would be able to fulfil its pledges, and that the Revolution of March 1917 would remain for ever worthy of the description of "Great and Bloodless," which was applied to it in the beginning. But these radiant hopes were destroyed, even before the Bolshevik *coup d'état* of the following November. It was not given to the Provisional Government to make the Revolution of March 1917 the first chapter of "the happiest era" in Russian history.[2]

The Government and the "Soviet"

If at the outset the Provisional Government enjoyed uncontestable popularity, it was certainly not because it had been born of

1 The following are some of the most important of these measures: the announcement of the creation of a Constituent Assembly, which was to be the supreme arbitrator of Russia's destinies (March 16th); the annulment of all decrees promulgated by the old régime in violation of the Finnish Constitution (March 17th); the proclamation of the independence of Poland, within her ethnographic boundaries (March 19th); an appeal to the peasantry, calling on them not to seize private landed estates (March 20th); abolition of capital punishment (March 25th); suppression of all national and religious restrictions (April 2nd); preliminary measures for introducing the eight-hour day, etc.

Concerning capital punishment, it should be noted that for ordinary crimes it was suppressed in Russia by Empress Elizabeth in the middle of the XVIIIth century. Since then it was only inflicted by military courts or for political crimes.

2 If, in the beginning, the Provisional Committee of the Duma found itself naturally placed at the head of the Revolution, the tide of events very rapidly thrust it aside. Even in the first hours of the storm the directing role of the Duma had been more apparent than real. The Duma could not retain the soul of the Revolution. The latter was not brought about by the forces represented in the Assembly. Moreover, as soon as the uprising had triumphed, it advanced problems which could never have been debated in the Duma. This applies especially to its last two legislatures with their moderate and law-abiding majority which was quite unfitted to gain the confidence of the revolutionary forces now triumphing. The Tauride Palace remained the centre of the Revolution not because it was the seat of the Duma, but because both the Soviet and the Provisional Government had been formed there. The troops remained in direct contact with the Duma Committee only as long as their commanders retained a semblance of authority. When the latter vanished, which was not long in happening, the victorious masses ceased to take the least interest in the very existence of the Duma.

the Provisional Committee of the Duma. On the contrary, its revolutionary origin, the severance of continuity between it and the former Tsarist Government, in a word, its most vulnerable aspect from the legal point of view, was precisely what gave it prestige in the eyes of the masses. By its very composition, the Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers was much nearer to the victorious masses. The single political machine which hitherto exercised the central power, had been replaced by the play of two new directing organs, placed side by side, but clearly opposed to each other by their origins and by their essential natures. This duality made the task of canalizing the revolutionary torrent still more overwhelming.

Duality of Power

The duality of power was, in the opinion of many politicians of that time, and authors of "Memoirs" which have appeared since, one of the causes, if not the principal one, which led to the collapse of the March revolution.

The Provisional Government, as it was formed on the third day of the Revolution, included, for the most part, members of the Parliamentary Opposition belonging to more moderate parties than the Socialists. The latter were represented in it only by Kerensky, who was a member of the right wing of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries.* The position of the Government was therefore manifestly out of keeping with the political forces which the events had brought into the foreground of the political stage. As a result of the uprising all the Socialist Parties had increased in strength. On the contrary, nearly all the non-Socialist Parties—which but yesterday had formed an overwhelming majority in the Duma—simply ceased to exist. Among those parties, only the most radical one had preserved its organization and its influence in the country. This was the party of "the Liberty of the People," also called the *Constitutional-Democratic* Party, whose members (the "*K.D.s,*" as they were popularly known) held one-half of the portfolios in the Provisional Government.

From the start, therefore, the latter found itself at the extreme right wing of all the political forces engaged in the struggle. Had an actively working group more to the right existed, it would have served as counterpoise. Deprived of the benefit of such counterbalance the Provisional Government was doomed to slide towards the left, and to give way to the demands of the Workmen's and

Soldiers' Soviet, as well as to the pressure of the fermenting popular masses.

On the contrary, in the Soviet nearly all the intellectuals were Socialists. As to the workers and soldiers delegated to it, most of them were distributed among the different Socialist organizations and submitted to their leadership. The executive committee, which effectively directed the policy of the Soviet, numbered among its members the leaders of all the Socialist Parties. The Soviet called itself, in the terminology of the day, "the organ of the revolutionary democracy," as opposed to the "bourgeois government." Nevertheless, it represented nothing, in fact, but a *bloc* of Socialist Parties. The central committees of these parties sat behind the stage occupied by the Soviet, and dictated all its decisions. Under Socialist impetus, local Workmen's and Peasants' Soviets were formed in all parts of the country, and were represented by a Pan-Russian Central Executive Committee, also having its seat in St. Petersburg.

The Soviet—an Irresponsible Revolutionary Factor

Apart from their composition and their origins, there was a further fundamental distinction between the Soviet and the Provisional Government. While the latter was the official depositary of power, the Soviet acted as an irresponsible revolutionary factor. The leaders of the Soviet started from the conviction that Russia was going through her "bourgeois revolution," and that, while this was being accomplished, power must remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The task of the Soviet, its members held, was to prevent "bourgeois power" from violating democratic principles, and to obtain from it the maximum of social reforms.

The Soviets made no claim to exercise power, but solely to guard vigilantly the interests of "revolutionary democracy," that is to say, of the workmen, the soldiers, and the peasants. In the vast majority of cases the Soviet did not lay down rules for general application, but brought pressure on the Government, which at times went so far as to threaten its very existence.[1] Numerous

1 The Soviet regarded itself as the sole incarnation of the democratic masses. It estimated that the latter were too slightly represented—if at all—in the Provisional Government. The Soviet laboured under the intense fear of a possible counter-revolution, and refused its confidence to certain members of the Provisional Government, whom it regarded as not being sincere defenders of the interests of the people, because in the past they had been adverse to the very idea of a revolution. The Soviet considered itself to be, *par excellence*, "the mouthpiece of revolutionary democracy."

authors of "Memoirs" devoted to the Revolution cite cases where the Soviet compelled the Provisional Government to completely abandon some of the measures which the latter deemed indispensable.[1]

Impotence of Soviet before the Masses

But if the Soviet was able to bring effective pressure on the Government, it had on many occasions to recognize that it was impotent to exercise its will efficaciously on the masses. The authority of the Soviet was really very great only when its desires fully coincided with the immediate aspirations of the crowd. In such cases proclamations even of a purely declaratory nature were warmly received by the popular circles interested. This was, for example, the case of the "Declaration of the Rights of the Soldier," and also of the "Manifesto to the Peoples of the Whole World," which declared that "the hour had struck for all peoples to take into their own hands the destinies of peace and war."

The Order No. 1

Of all the edicts issued by the Soviets, the famous "Order No. 1" created the greatest impression, especially among the soldiers. It was published on March 14th in the name of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. It prescribed that committees should be elected by the various individual army units, and this contributed to the greatest extent to the disintegration of the troops. Nicholas Sukhanov, a prominent member of the Soviet, states in his Memoirs on the Revolution that the Order No. 1 "was an anonymous and collective work" due in great part to the inspiration of the obscure mass of the soldiers.[2] Neither the efforts of the War Minister,

1 In spite of all his firmness, a man like P. N. Miliukov—as he confessed—felt compelled, towards the end of the first Provisional Government, to make certain concessions, even if only of pure form. Yet it was he who, at the beginning of May 1917, advised Prince Lvov, then head of the Government, "to remain faithful to the idea of strong government, to sacrifice Kerensky, and to oppose resolutely all attempts by the Soviets to grasp the power."

2 According to these memoirs, "N. D. Sokolov was seated writing in Room No. 13 of the Tauride Palace, during a session of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. He had literally disappeared in the midst of a closely packed group of soldiers, who were seated at, leaning on, or standing round his desk, and dictating or suggesting to him what they wished him to set down on paper. The scene reminded me of the page in which Leon Tolstoi relates how he composed stories, in the school at Iassnaia Poliana, with the help of the children."

Apart from the effects due to the creation of the elected committees, the dis-

Guchkov, nor those of the High Command of the army, were able to attenuate the evil influence of the Order No. 1. The soldiers at once made it an article of faith. The Soviet itself realized—although unhappily too late—the enormous harm caused by this document, and sent out an explanation to the effect that it must be applied only in the rear. These belated instructions received no attention and demonstrated with especial clearness that the authority of the Soviet was reduced to nil, so to speak, when its appeals were not in accord with the desires of the masses. A similar result attended all other proclamations in which the Soviet mentioned things which the masses did not feel inclined to hear: such as the necessity of observing "freely accepted" discipline; the duty incumbent on democracy of defending, with arms in hand, "Liberty and the Revolution" against the foreign enemy; the inadmissibility of arbitrary acts, such as scorning the authority of constituted powers or appropriating the premises or the property of others, etc.

While the Soviet had no difficulty in provoking popular anger, or directing the discontent of the masses against the bourgeoisie, it was powerless to calm the tempestuous turbulence of the crowd, or to induce the people to wait in patience for the realization of proposed reforms. In this lay its weakness.

Impotence of the Provisional Government

The Provisional Government, on its side, was also affected with impotence. This was largely due to the attitude of the Soviet towards it. Had not the Soviet, in its manifesto, exhorted the masses to uphold the Provisional Government only as long as the latter kept its engagements with the Soviet and pursued the democratic programme subscribed by it? It goes without saying that a Government which was "subject to supervision" and trusted only "with reserve" is from its inception deprived of all the necessary authority. Moreover, the public orators and the Socialist Press—

appearance of discipline and the disorganization of the army were fostered to the greatest extent by the following articles of Order No. 1: Article 3: In all its political activities, each army unit is subordinated to its committees, as well as to the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies; Article 4: The instructions issued by the Military Commission of the Duma of the Empire must be executed only when they are not contradictory to the orders and decisions of the Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers; Article 5: Arms of all categories (rifles, machine guns, armoured cars, etc.) will be at the disposal and under the control of the company and battalion committees, and will not be, in any case, handed over to the officers, even should they demand delivery of them.

whose circulation had become very large—described the Government as "bourgeois," foreign to the people. They asserted that "democracy," personified by the Soviet, in order not to be betrayed, must at no time allow the Government to escape its vigilance. Nevertheless, the weakness of the Provisional Government cannot be explained solely by the attitude of the Soviet. The "pressure" of the latter would not have been decisive if the Government had been supported by any real forces. But, as a matter of fact, throughout its entire duration, the Government was never able to find or to create such support.

Absence of Adequate Government Machinery

At the time when, following the revolutionary outbursts, the Provisional Government came to power, the principal means of action which it could bring to bear upon the masses were essentially of a moral character.

The old Government machine had vanished, and no new one yet replaced it. The army—the ultimate and most drastic instrument to which the authority may, in general, have recourse—was insufficiently submissive to the influence of the Provisional Government. Instead of commanding and forcibly breaking down resistance, the Government was driven to temporize until it should have restored the machinery of State compulsion. It was reduced to pleading and persuading, and deluded itself, sometimes deliberately, as to the efficacity of the spoken word. The fact that the Provisional Government had to rely almost exclusively on the voluntary obedience of the citizens, was the initial cause of the concessions it had to make to the Soviet, up to the point of sacrificing its own plans and decisions.

Claims of the Masses and Bolshevik Agitation

In the past the Russian masses had been kept away from any direct participation in the public life of the nation. Therefore, they had no experience of public affairs or organization; neither did they possess any sense of realities. Lacking general culture, they were good ground for Utopian ideas and maximalist tendencies. Prior to the Revolution they had readily lent their ears to the seductive appeals constantly made to them. Now that the whirlwind of the insurrection had destroyed the machinery of coercion, these enticements had become still more alluring and pressing.

The Russian peasants and workmen profoundly believed that the Revolution would enable them to realize, wholly and without

delay, their hereditary aspirations. Whoever attempted to warn them against exaggerated demands, or advised them to show patience, was met with hostility. It was most difficult to make them comprehend the extreme complexity of problems which, to them, seemed quite simple. Any attempt of this kind was impeded by the untiring propaganda of maximalist ideas conducted by the Bolshevik extremists.

As early as March 13th, the second day of the Revolution, the St. Petersburg Bolsheviks issued, in the name of their Central Committee, a manifesto which stated that "the immediate and urgent duty of the Provisional Government—born of the Revolution—was to enter into negotiations with the proletariat of the belligerent countries in order to prepare the revolutionary struggle of all the peoples against their oppressors; against all the monarchies, against all the capitalist cliques, and to cause the immediate cessation of the human butchery imposed on the enslaved peoples." A week later the St. Petersburg Bolshevik Committee proposed to the Soviet of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies "to appeal, through the respective Socialist Parties, to the proletariats of all the belligerent countries urging them to rise in revolt against their oppressors, and to fraternize at the front with the revolutionary armies of democratic Russia." This committee, at the same time, decided to "demand that the Soviet introduce immediately, by decree, the eight hour day for wage-earners in all domains."

The Bolsheviks subsequently adopted a still more peremptory attitude in regard to the Provisional Government, and to all those who argued that a certain limit must be fixed to the constantly increasing demands of the masses. Already in April some influential members of the Bolshevik Party declared in their speeches that "if the revolutionary democracy wanted to continue to develop the Revolution, it must firmly persevere in the attitude of complete distrust towards a Government not issued from revolutionary democracy itself." In making such a declaration to the Pan-Russian Conference of the Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, Kamenev did not yet appeal for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. He demanded only the establishment of "the most severe control" of the Soviet "over the Provisional Government," which he described as "the legal defender of the illegal counter-revolutionary tendencies." There was only a very subtle margin between such appeals and incitations for open disobedience to the orders of the Provisional Government, and this line the Bolsheviks

were not long in crossing. The first to do so was Lenin, who declared that the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the Provisional Government was much too conciliatory. After having left Switzerland and crossed Germany with the permission of the military authorities of the Reich, Lenin arrived on April 16th in St. Petersburg, personally to assume the leadership of his party.

Lenin[1]

On the eve of his departure for Russia, Lenin set forth his point of view in his "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers." "This," he said, "must be our watchword: 'No support for the Guchkov-Miliukov Government!' One must be blind, after the events of March 1917, not to see that the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war is under way. Long live the proletarian revolution which has now begun in Europe!"

It was with such ideas that Lenin entered Russia. At first, even to his comrades, they appeared too doctrinaire and too Utopian. But, by using his usual energy and his immense prestige, Lenin broke down all opposition. The first Pan-Russian Conference of the Bolshevik Party, which took place legally in Russia and which was held from May 7 to 12, 1917, adopted Lenin's fundamental theses, and from them drew all the necessary deductions.[2] In its resolutions the conference declared itself favourable to the transfer of "all power to the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies"; to "the immediate handing over of all land to the peasants, organized in Soviets of peasant deputies"; to the necessity of explaining without delay to the proletariat and the people "the urgency of preparing Socialism by a number of measures practically realizable forthwith." It declared, moreover, that the Bolshevik Party "will support the general fraternization of all soldiers of the belligerent countries and endeavour to transform this spontaneous manifestation of solidarity

1 Lenin (or rather Ulianov, which was his real family name) came from a family of the nobility. His father was a teacher in a secondary school. He was born on April 22, 1870, in Simbirsk (now Ulianovsk). His eldest brother, who had joined the revolutionary Terrorist group of the "Will of the People," took part in an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Alexander III and was executed in 1891.

2 It is true that, at that time, in most of the questions raised by him, Lenin did not succeed in obtaining unanimously favourable votes. His resolution on "the present moment," for instance, was adopted by 71 votes against 39, with 8 abstentions. Among the influential Bolsheviks, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Rykov, voted against this proposal of Lenin.

of all the oppressed into a conscious well-organized movement with the object of bringing to power the revolutionary proletariat in all the belligerent countries." Like ideas were untiringly expounded by Bolshevik agitators and sympathizers in the Press and in innumerable meetings held without interruption in the towns, in all the rural districts, and even on the front.

The masses eagerly absorbed the teaching of the Bolsheviks. Agitators had no difficulty in convincing the peasants that the Revolution must immediately give them land, peace and liberty. To their simple minds liberty meant the total suppression of all moral and juridicial restrictions.

The ordinary industrial workmen became in turn the prey of maximalist ideas spread by Bolshevik propaganda. They came to believe, no doubt in all sincerity, that in war-time, when all the economic and financial capacities of the country were strained to the utmost, wages could be tripled and even quadrupled without affecting production, and both the hours and the output of labour could at the same time be reduced. It also appeared to them quite a simple matter to burden the profits of the industrial concerns with the largest participation of labour, and even to proceed to the immediate nationalization of the principal industries. The soldiers and sailors—"the pride of the Russian Revolution"—were no less simple-minded when they imagined that the establishment of general fraternization at the front and the refusal to participate in further offensive operations would be sufficient to put an immediate stop to "the Imperialist war" and to bring about a peace "without annexations or indemnities" for the reciprocal satisfaction of both belligerent camps.

The appeals to the masses launched by the Provisional Government failed to obtain a success in any way comparable to that of the demagogic agitation of the Bolsheviks. The latter had no trouble in painting this or that well-born or well-to-do Minister of the new Government as "an enemy of the working classes" and the confiding crowds were fertile ground for such insinuations.

The political inexperience of the Russian masses contributed largely to the destructive work of the Bolshevik propaganda. This was facilitated, however, by the gulf which existed between the masses and the cultured section of the nation. For many years the Russian intellectuals had endeavoured to bridge this abyss, but it still yawned on the eve of the Revolution, owing to the mistaken policy of the old régime. Here, again, the heavy historical heritage of the past left its fatal mark on the events of 1917.

The Revolution and the War

But the most important of all the reasons which opened the heart of the masses to the Bolshevik appeals was incontestably the fact that the Revolution broke out in the midst of the war, and, to a great extent, because of the war.

The war had, at first, united the whole population in an immense blaze of patriotism. Its long duration, however, and the defeats which followed the earlier victories, soon changed the country's state of mind. Those among the fourteen million men mobilized, who went to the front, speedily realized that the checks suffered by the armies were in great part due to lack of sufficient war material, and that the responsibility for this was due to the negligence and incapacity of the Imperial Government.

As the trained men of the regular army succumbed on the battlefield in an unequal struggle, demoralization developed among the troops and spread rapidly. Even those very men who had won such brilliant victories at the start of hostilities, and had driven the Austrian Monarchy to the edge of the precipice, finished by despairing of final success. Desertion assumed great proportions. To be sure, by 1917 the help of the Allies and the efforts of the national industry, supported by the *zemstvos*, the municipalities and the association of war industries, had enormously improved the technical equipment of the Russian Army. The troops were, nevertheless, no longer able to recover their former fighting spirit.

The Thirst for Peace

When the news reached the trenches that revolution had broken out in the interior, and that old-time discipline had disappeared, it became impossible to force the men to continue fighting. The soldiers listened only to those who promised them a speedy peace. It was not merely because they were tired of war that the peasants in military great-coats were in a hurry to return to their villages. They were convinced that the partition of all the landed estates could no longer be delayed, and were afraid they would not get home in time to benefit by it. While the Provisional Government was determined to continue the war, the Bolsheviks were preaching fraternization with the soldiers in the opposite trenches, which was equivalent to repudiation of hostilities. The Bolshevik watchword "Down with the war!" echoed from all directions. No other prospect

was so attractive to the innumerable and embittered lower classes, of whom the millions of soldiers in arms were the sons.

Zimmerwald and Kienthal

On their side the moderate Socialists, who formed part of the Soviet and subsequently entered the Provisional Government, are also to a certain degree—unwillingly it is true—responsible for the moral disintegration of the army. Still feeling the attraction of the ideas voiced in Zimmerwald and Kienthal they could not help showing it in some of their addresses. It will be recalled that, from September 5 to 12, 1915, an International Socialist Congress met at Zimmerwald and that its Left Wing—the Russian one—voted a resolution according to which the outcome of the war should not be a nationalist victory, but a "peace without annexations, based on the self-determination of peoples, and the fight for Socialism." A second congress held in another Swiss town, Kienthal, from February 5 to 9, 1916, went further, and called for a struggle, "by every means, for an immediate peace without annexations." At the same time, the extremist groups, severed themselves from the Socialist Parties, repudiated all engagements with "the nationalistic sections of the international proletariat" and established closer contact among themselves.[1] The Revolution of March having afforded a broad platform to the Bolsheviks and enabled them to speak loudly and forcibly, they endeavoured by all means in their power to put into practice the Zimmerwald and Kienthal resolutions, of which Lenin and Trotsky had themselves been the principal inspirers. Certain eminent Socialists, among them Chkheidze, Tzeretelli and Kerensky, who were strenuously opposed to any kind

1 In this association of the extremist wings of the Socialist Parties, and in their severance from the "nationalist sections of the international proletariat," can be seen the embryo of the future Communist Party and of the Third International. It must not be forgotten, however, that, in the mind of Lenin, neither the Zimmerwald nor the Kienthal conferences had brought about a sufficiently definite rupture with the "national defence" Socialists, and that the "Centerist" majority was to blame for this. In agreement with Lenin's point of view, the VIIth Pan-Russian Bolshevik Conference, held at St. Petersburg from May 7 to 12, 1917, declared that "Zimmerwald had already begun to be a fetter for the revolutionary movement." In virtue of a declaration voted by this conference, it was left to the Bolsheviks to take the initiative of "founding the Third International, which will break definitely with the national defence Socialists, and energetically combat the conciliatory policy of the Centre. The new Socialist International can be created only by the working masses themselves, and by their revolutionary struggle in their respective countries."

of defeatism, thought it possible to conciliate a patriotic attitude with adherence to the Zimmerwald declarations and also called themselves "Zimmerwaldians." The "Appeal to the Peoples of the Whole World," drawn up by the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies on March 27, 1917, embodied various affirmations inspired by Zimmerwaldian ideas. It said: "We address ourselves to the peoples of the entire world, who have been decimated by a monstrous war, and declare that the hour has arrived to begin a decisive struggle against the annexation tendencies of all countries. The hour has come when all peoples must take into their hands the solution of the questions concerning war and peace. Russian democracy, conscious of its revolutionary strength, declares that it will oppose by every means the annexationist policy of its dominant classes. It appeals to the peoples of Europe for common and decisive action in favour of peace."

This manifesto was far from being the sole demonstration of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies in favour of the Zimmerwald ideas. The national defence Socialists appear to have been convinced that their new watchword of "peace without annexations or indemnities" was better suited to overcome the weariness of the soldiers, and to revive in them the will to resume the struggle, than the gloomy prospect of continuing "to the end" a war which had already lasted too long. The manifesto of March 27th went so far, however, as to state that "the Russian revolution would not recoil before the bayonets of the invader" and that it "would not allow Russia to be overcome by a foreign military power." In commenting on the manifesto Chkheidze, the president of the Soviet, still more emphasized the necessity of the army keeping its ability to fight. "In addressing the Germans," he asserted, "we remain weapon in hand." But if in this manifesto the soldiers understood quite well the passages tending to peace, they were not inclined to pay attention to those urging defence. On the whole, all these formulas were not clear enough. Instead of barring the road, they rather prepared the way for Bolshevik propaganda which openly invited the soldiers to throw down their arms and to leave the trenches in order to "fraternize" with the enemy.

In Full Disorganization

The growing decomposition of the army greatly fostered the development of the destructive forces of the Revolution and their

predominance over the elements of order. The result was that the basis on which the authority of the Provincial Government rested was gradually sapped. Before it had time to settle satisfactorily its rělations with the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, or to restore the disorganized Government machinery and re-create the means of enforcing order, the peasants began arbitrarily to appropriate the estates of the landowners, the workmen to take possession of the factories, the railway workers to seize the railways. Owing to the newly elected soldier committees, the army was menaced with falling into the hands of the rank and file. Similarly, in all the branches of the administration, as well as in all industrial enterprises, committees, often composed of entirely uneducated men, came spontaneously into being and claimed to exercise surveillance over the activities of these institutions and undertakings.

The country started with long strides on the road to anarchy and economic chaos. Very energetic measures alone would have been able to check the progress of disintegration.

The Provisional Government and the "Strong Power"

It goes without saying that, under the prevailing circumstances, had such measures been generally possible, they would have encountered the greatest difficulties. The orders of the military authorities themselves remained at this period in most cases a dead letter. Thus, for instance, no attention was paid to the decree issued by the commander of the military district of St. Petersburg, in July, concerning the measures to be taken for "the immediate re-establishment of order." It is true that during the first months of the Revolution, the Provisional Government itself did not regard the consolidation of its authority as the principal and the most urgent of the tasks before it.

Characteristic of the situation was the fact that during the sittings of the Ministerial Council, Miliukov and Guchkov frequently had to insist—and sometimes under the threat of handing in their resignation—on the obvious necessity of creating "a strong Government," and of being prepared to "act efficaciously against anyone guilty of insubordination." Prince Lvov, the first head of the Provisional Government, was not a fighting man and lacked the energy necessary to curb the unbound forces. Moreover, his entire way of thinking was opposed to methods of coercion. He considered that the life of a nation takes its essential course outside of political

or social struggles. He was profoundly convinced that the real ideals of the Russian people, and the very foundation of their existence, lay in the search for internal peace, resignation, patience and labour. Prince Lvov undoubtedly attached a very high value to the idea of liberty. The political and economic dislocation of the country had already reached alarming proportions, when he nevertheless declared with all sincerity that: "The future belongs to the people, who have revealed their genius in these historic days"; and he added: "O liberty, let others despair, for I have never doubted thee." His fundamental dislike for the use of force, which bordered on *Tolstoi-ism*, rendered him, however, incapable of forcibly defending the cause of liberty.

He was not the only member of the Provisional Government to profess "non-resistance to evil," but among his Ministerial colleagues this philosophy took on a different aspect. These men were quite capable of fighting for freedom and risking their lives and those of their adversaries for it. But when it came to a question of using strong measures against the masses, they were paralysed by indecision. The Russian Democrats, and above all the Socialists, were in the habit of considering political coercion as one of the principal attributes of the execrated autocracy. It was therefore painful to them to accept the idea that, in the atmosphere of the Russian Revolution—with its unchained elements, the exigencies of the war, and the violence of centrifugal forces—coercion and repression must be recognized as one of the corner-stones of governmental action. Men of this type, accustomed as they were to idealize the people, remained true to their creed when they tried to convince themselves that the awful chaos prevailing in Russia was merely the inevitable consequence of the recent collapse of the old régime, that everything would settle down in time, and that revolutionary reforms could be constructed only on the basis of a freely accepted moral discipline.

Kerensky, whose name will remain in history as that of the most representative men of the pre-Bolshevik phase of the revolution, never ceased to invoke "revolutionary order" and "revolutionary discipline." When he felt overwhelmed by the wave of disorder, he urged the democratic masses, in a memorable speech, to demonstrate by their behaviour that they were composed of "free citizens," and not of "revolted slaves."

The critical weakness from which the Provisional Government suffered through its whole life was certainly to a great extent

caused by the fact that it was materially impossible to re-establish order and authority as speedily as the situation required. This assertion does not, however, lessen the heavy responsibility incurred by the men, who for moral scruples recoiled before the necessity of recurring to all means, including the use of force, to stop revolutionary excesses.

The Government's Excessive Prudence

M. Benes, the eminent statesman and President of the Czechoslovak Republic, speaking from his own experience, concludes that in 1917 the Russian Socialists of the Right failed to show the necessary decision in circumstances which called for urgent solution. "Bold in their appeals," he writes, "they were the slaves of the so-called will of the people. . . . They did not dare to proclaim the Republic before they were forced to; they did not dare to settle the agrarian problem before the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; they did not dare to put the death penalty into operation in the army, or to restrict public liberties as an exceptional situation demanded. They were the victims of a democratic abstraction."[1]

The accuracy of this view cannot be denied, except that it should not refer only to the Socialists. It applied fully to the Provisional Government throughout its existence and notwithstanding the changes in its composition. The circumstances called for action, audacity, and decision, and more often than not the Government deliberately took refuge in inaction and refused to settle questions which were vital and imperatively urgent for the country. The main reason which prompted it to shrink from decisions was the widespread fear of usurping the sovereign rights of a future Constituent Assembly.

When it published its programme, the Provisional Government pledged itself "to take steps without delay for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly to be elected by universal suffrage, equal and secret, and which will be called upon to settle the form of the Government and the Constitution of the country." From that date the same engagement figured in all the declarations of principles published by the successive Cabinets. The necessity of convoking the Constituent Assembly as soon as possible, and the fact that it alone would be empowered to act as the real "master of the Russian

1 *Präger Presse*, October 2, 1927.

Fatherland," had been unanimously recognized since the triumph of the Revolution. Even men who, on the eve of the Revolution, had been hostile to political democratism, had rallied to that idea.[1]

Foremost among the problems, for which a solution was awaited with impatience by the innumerable mass of the Russian peasants, was the agrarian question. The Provisional Government had expended its efforts in order to make the peasants understand that only the Constituent Assembly would have the right to enact definite laws on this subject. While the development of the Revolution, and the very nature of the social forces by which it had been provoked, indicated that the attribution of the land to the peasants had now become a certainty, the Provisional Government refrained from taking definite steps to satisfy the peasant. Dominated by an over-strict ideological probity, it allowed to escape the best opportunity it could expect for definitely securing the support of the rural classes and thus becoming the master of the situation. Had it done so, it would have successfully led the country to the Constituent Assembly.[2]

The postponement of all principal decisions until the reunion of the Constituent Assembly was rendered even more deplorable by the fact that the convocation of this Assembly proved to be a much more complicated and long drawn-out matter than the first Provisional Government had anticipated.[3] More than ten months

1 Even Purishkevich, a member of the Duma and a convinced monarchist, who had hitherto been an ardent partisan of absolutism, attested his loyalty to the future Constituent Assembly in an address which he delivered during one of his visits to the front. Numberless organizations—professional, scientific, national, social—in manifestos or in resolutions voted in congresses, hastened to affirm their attachment to the Revolution and to "the future master of the Russian Fatherland," the Constituent Assembly. Even the Bolsheviks blamed the Provisional Government for not having sufficiently hastened the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. They did not hesitate to make this contention one of their principal accusations against this Government, in spite of the fact that they themselves launched the slogan, "All the power to the Soviets," that is to say to the workers alone, which was in itself a rejection of the Constituent Assembly.

2 In countries like Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc., which after the war had to re-organize or to create afresh their public life, the new Governments formed there benefited by the Russian experiment and acted with much more audacity than the Russian Provisional Government. They have, however, not incurred the reproach of having usurped the powers of any elective Assembly.

3 One of the reasons for the delay in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly was the desire to elaborate an electoral law as democratic and perfect as possible. On the other hand, contrary to what a realist policy should have dictated, the importance of having the Assembly meet at the earliest possible date was not sufficiently understood from the outset. Had it been very speedily called together

elapsed between the outbreak of the Revolution and January 18, 1918, which was the first and only day of the existence of the Pan-Russian Constituent Assembly. During these long months the patience of the masses was exhausted, and they became more and more inclined to listen to the demagogues who promised them the immediate realization of all their desires.

The problem of war or peace, as has already been pointed out, rendered the situation of the Provisional Government still more tragic and gave to the governmental crisis a particularly acute character. A succession of different Cabinets did not at any time prevent the Provisional Government from declaring its loyalty to the Allies and from persevering in the decision to continue the war at their side. Yet it was faced with the dilemma either of concluding an immediate—and therefore separate—peace and maintaining itself in power, or of pursuing the war and being overthrown. Feeling obliged to choose the first alternative the Provisional Government took the road to ruin; and those who succeeded it did not feel the moral duty imposed by the brotherhood of arms. A separate peace was concluded on the corpse of the Revolution of March 1917. It was born of the Bolshevik *coup d'état.*

Subsequently, during the Congress of the Third International at Moscow, in 1921, Lenin posed the question: "Why have we won?" and he hastened to answer it himself by stating that the Bolshevik Party had defeated its adversaries because it addressed the masses with the slogans "Peace at any price!" and "All the land for the peasants immediately!"

Government's Attempt to Affirm its Authority

It is certain, however, that the Provisional Government never had the intention of retreating before its ideological adversaries or of giving up the position it held in the interests of democracy. As time went on it abandoned the illusion that it would be possible entirely to rely for support on the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses. The faith in the common sense of the latter was receding, together with the many deceptive beliefs born in the dawn of the "great and bloodless" revolution.

Finally, realizing the necessity of strengthening its authority, the

after the events of March 1917, the Constituent Assembly would have given a legal basis to the new régime, and would thus have increased the chances for the establishment of democracy in Russia.

Government sought to do so. With this in view, it effected changes among its own members and enacted certain administrative measures to the same purpose.

From the end of April, however, it became clear that the relations between the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies and the Government, as they then existed, made it impossible to establish either a stable government or the necessary public order.

Soviet versus Government

At this juncture, the pressure of the Soviet on the Government, especially in regard to international matters, became so strong that a serious conflict arose between the former and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miliukov.[1] This situation was exploited by the Extremist elements, who launched violent attacks against the Government, and on May 3rd provoked serious disorders in the streets of St. Petersburg. Firing even occurred during the evening. The part played by the Soviets in this turbulence was somewhat equivocal. Although at that time the Soviet had no sympathy for manifestations of a Bolshevik character, this revolutionary council was perpetually in fear of a counter-revolutionary move. Under the pretext that the troops in the capital might be used for other purposes than merely restoring order, the Soviet directed that they should remain confined to their barracks unless specially authorized by it to leave them. Thanks, however, to the efforts of one of its leaders—the *Social-Democrat,* Tzeretelli, a sincere supporter of the Government—the Soviet ended by approving a motion of confidence in the Government.

From then onward the majority of the Ministers rallied to the idea that it was indispensable, in future, to safeguard the country against the pressure exercised on the Government by the irresponsible elements, and that, with this object in view, the reciprocal relations between the Cabinet and the Soviet must first of all be put on a proper basis. Lvov, Kerensky, and Tereschenko pointed out

1 The Soviets demanded that the Provisional Government should publish a declaration setting forth the real objects of the war, and expressly stipulating that peace must involve "neither annexations nor indemnities." Further, the Soviets insisted on the Government obtaining the assurance of the Allied States that they would publish declarations of a similar character. Such demands, in the eyes of Miliukov, were unacceptable. He refused to agree to anything more than to communicate to the Allied Government the manifesto issued by him on March 27th, with the statement that "Free Russia" aspired to establish peace based on the right of peoples to dispose of themselves.

that the Soviet should be represented in the Cabinet by Ministers chosen by it and thus assume a share of the responsibility for the Government's policy. With much hesitation the Soviet decided to approve the formation of a Coalition Ministry, in which the Socialists would participate.[1]

The First Coalition Government

The first Coalition Ministry existed from May 19 to July 15, 1917. Its programme, which was made public on May 19th, was an evident compromise between points of view which were difficult to reconcile, and from the outset foreshadowed the shocks to which the policy of the new Cabinet would inevitably be submitted.

The Coalition Government was faced with the most difficult problems. At the front the demands for peace were becoming more and more insistent. While the troops were, at the best, still willing to hold the lines, they refused to take the offensive. The non-Russian sections of the population were daily pressing the claims of their own nationality and even, in some cases, applied them *proprio motu*, in defiance of Government orders. The disorganization of the transport system had brought on a serious industrial crisis. The exigencies of the workers incessantly increased.

Crisis in the First Coalition Government

Most of the conditions which had caused the state of anarchy into which the country was slipping, persisted also after the advent of the Coalition Government. Dissensions soon arose between Socialist and non-Socialist Ministers. The differences of opinion could be concealed to a certain extent when they concerned diplomatic and military matters, but it was impossible to reach the least sign of agreement on questions of internal policy. As early as May 31st the Minister for Commerce and Industry, Konovalov, informed the Premier that in the new atmosphere which had developed he could not continue at his post. This "bourgeois" Minister admitted that he was in agreement with the Socialists

1 In this new Cabinet the Socialist wing was represented by Tseretelli, the leader of the governmental majority of the Soviet; by Chernov, leader of the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party; and by Kerensky, who took over the portfolios of the army and the navy, previously held by Guchkov, who had retired. The post of Minister of Foreign Affairs was entrusted to Tereschenko in replacement of Miliukov. The latter declined the portfolio of Education, and refused (like Guchkov) to remain in a Government whose policy he considered too weak.

on many points, and that he was, in particular, "entirely in favour of organizing conciliation chambers everywhere, of establishing collective wage tariffs, of creating arbitration committees in all the great industrial centres." He remained sceptical, however, in regard to the measures contemplated by the Government for regulating industrial production, and for its subjection to social control. In Konovalov's opinion "this implantation of democratic organizations would result in the introduction of men devoid of all economic experience into most of the industrial concerns, and lead to their disorganization, instead of the improvement sought for." From Konovalov's point of view, the fundamental cause of the economic breakdown lay in the hopelessly prolonged governmental crisis, and the only chance of ending it would be for "the Government to make use forthwith of its full power and begin to re-establish discipline, which has been scorned and despised during these three months of sad experience." Konovalov added that, from the attitude of the Cabinet he saw no sign of its intention to exercise strong power and this was what prompted his decision to withdraw.[1]

1 On the eve of his resignation, in a speech before a congress of war industries committees at Moscow, Konovalov set forth in detail the causes of the economic disorders from which the country was suffering. "The appeals which are being made to the workers," he said, "carry within them the destruction, the anarchy, and the ruin of social life and of the functioning of the State. Under the influence of this agitation carried on by men without responsibility, the masses are putting forward claims the realization of which would directly bring about the collapse of business undertakings. . . . These claims are being presented in more and more insistent and insufferable forms. If the feverish minds do not speedily grow calmer, and the leaders of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies are unable to recover control over the movement and bring it back into the channel of the legitimate class struggle, we shall see scores and hundreds of factories closed down. The State cannot undertake to give the working classes a privileged position at the expense of the rest of the nation."

The alarming declarations made by Konovalov could in no way be interpreted as "bourgeois inventions." On May 4th—prior to the warning given by Konovalov, —the *Social-Democratic* economist, Maslov, had already published an "open letter" to the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, in which he said that he "wished to cry out very loudly, in order to be heard by the whole of Russia, that the country was in danger . . . from the fact that the interests of the working classes were in disaccord with the collective interests of the State." "What value can there be in the conquest of the eight-hour day," he asked, "if there is no longer any work to be done? What value can the increase of wages have if there is no more bread?" Soon after the resignation of Konovalov, the *Social-Democratic* Labour Minister, Skobelev, also felt compelled to say in an address to the workers: "At the present moment organized action is giving place to spontaneous acts; without taking into account the real possibilities of the country or those of the industrial concerns, you are demanding increases of wages which are having destructive effects on industry."

Shortly afterwards another conflict arose between Prince Lvov, the Premier, and Chernov, Minister for Agriculture and leader of the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party, whose agrarian policy lacked straightforwardness and was tainted by demagogy. Chernov, who liked to call himself the "minister of the villagers," and who thought he was very popular among the peasants, incited them—through his agents and in contradiction to the policy followed by the Government—to seize immediately the private landed estates.

Intensified Bolshevik Propaganda

While the Cabinet was torn by internal discord, Bolshevik propaganda visibly intensified throughout the country. Since his arrival, Lenin personally directed the agitation and soon made its effects powerfully felt. The masses of workers and soldiers fell more and more under the spell of Lenin's slogans, "All power to the Soviet!" and "Down with the capitalist ministers!" The sailors at Kronstadt were already completely converted to Bolshevism, and had won, in the mouths of the Bolshevik orators, the flattering title of "the ornament and pride of the Revolution." The agitation was not limited to St. Petersburg and its surroundings, but had assumed extraordinary proportions throughout the whole country. The vast territory of Russia—and especially the regions occupied by the army at the front—was being overrun by Bolshevik emissaries, who harangued the crowd everywhere and distributed profuse supplies of newspapers, pamphlets, tracts, and wall-posters. Notwithstanding the fact that war was being waged, the Coalition Government did not think fit to prohibit this destructive propaganda. From the Cabinet's point of view, the principle of freedom of speech and thought continued to be intangible and absolute.

Kerensky's Attempt to Revive the Morale of Army

Military operations had been completely brought to a standstill on the various fronts. The authority of the commanders had "practically fallen to zero." Ceaseless soldiers' meetings, in which Bolshevik speakers gave rein to inflamed oratory, continued the disorganization of the Russian Army. Kerensky, now War Minister, decided to make a tour of the entire front, with the object of reviving the military spirit of the men, and of "convincing" them of the necessity for an offensive. He spoke to the soldiers, of liberty, of

revolutionary duty and of the Republic. He told them, at the same time, that "liberty obliges," and that "the suppression of the old system of discipline" with its worn-out practices called for "moral obligations, as a counter-party." His speeches, in appearance, had a huge success, and were received by the soldiers with enthusiastic applause, but in fact they brought about very little change. The only units which showed any disposition to continue fighting were the "shock battalions," especially formed to serve as an example.

At one moment it seemed likely that the revolutionary prestige and the inflammatory eloquence of Kerensky would produce the desired effect and instil in the men the will to resume fighting. Hoping that a military success would put new blood into the troops, Kerensky ordered a large offensive on the front. At the same time as this became known, it was announced in St. Petersburg that military operations were developing favourably. This news exercised a very strong impression on the people, who for some months had heard of nothing but desertions, soldiers' meetings, and collective acts of insubordination. Crowds delirious with patriotism filled the streets. Hopes for a national recovery were not revived for long; hard realities hastened to destroy them.

First Coalition Ministry's Fall

Meanwhile, the internecine struggle in the Government became increasingly acute. The crisis ended on July 15th with the resignation of four Ministers—Shingarev, Shakhovskoi, Manuilov and Stepanov—who represented in the Cabinet the "bourgeois" *Constitutional-Democratic* Party. The apparent reason for their retirement was the fact that Kerensky, Nekrassov, and Tereschenko had concluded an agreement with the Ukraine politicians in regard to the autonomy of that part of Russia. This act of capital importance had been decided without having been discussed with the four *Constitutional-Democratic* Ministers who considered such a procedure as a violation of the very principle of Coalition and as one more proof that their presence in the Cabinet had become useless.

Attempted Armed Revolt in St. Petersburg

This split in the first Coalition Ministry gave the Bolsheviks an excellent opportunity to demand formally that the Soviet of Work-

men's and Soldiers' Deputies should renounce all co-operation with the bourgeoisie and take the power entirely into their own hands. By this time the Bolshevik slogan, "All the power for the Soviets," had permeated the minds of the masses to such an extent that on July 16th—the day following the fall of the Ministry—several military units and a large number of workmen decided to take immediate action and force the transfer of power to the Soviet. This movement, entirely inspired by Bolshevik ideas and slogans, was launched by common party members over the heads of the Bolshevik leaders. Therefore the latter were in a certain measure justified in saying that the events of July had occurred "spontaneously" and without their consent. But as soon as it became evident that the manifestations had taken on an insurrectional character and that their party had gained the support of numerically strong forces, among which were 20,000 armed sailors from Kronstadt, the Bolshevik leaders changed their attitude and decided to take over the control of the movement. While, at the time of the event, they denied having had any share in the affair, they afterwards found it useless to disavow the part which they had played in it.

The resolution adopted by the enlarged Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, at its meeting in St. Petersburg on July 27th and 28th, revealed the role of this group in the following terms: "In spite of all its efforts to prevent the unorganized explosion of the masses which it foresaw, our party found itself before the accomplished fact. Representing the masses of the revolutionary proletariat, our party had the duty of intervening in the anarchic march of events, in order to give them an organized and peaceful character."

This official version, this affectation of having desired to give a pacific aspect to the movement, does not agree with the facts. As soon as the Bolshevik leaders had decided to intervene, the centre of the movement was immediately transferred to the private house of the ballerina, Kseshinskaia, the citadel of Lenin himself, which had been occupied by the Bolsheviks for some time, with entire contempt for the rights of the owner. From the balcony of this residence Lenin, Lunacharsky and other eminent Bolsheviks poured forth incendiary speeches to the crowd. The technical side of the uprising was directed from the same dwelling by the military organization attached to the Central Committee of the Party. It sent out, on its own note-heads, orders for armed mobilization to the troops, to the

armoured cars and the cruisers at Kronstadt. The latter were commanded to concentrate in the mouth of the Neva river. At the same time it indicated the points in the city which should be occupied by armed forces.

There was a moment when the situation of the Provisional Government appeared to be hopeless, but the hour of the Bolshevik victory had not yet struck. The movement of July 16th and 17th ended by a check. The insurgents lacked firmness before the energetic resistance opposed to them by the Cossack regiments garrisoned in the capital. The ardour of the insurgents was also damped by a deluge of rain. Moreover, their morale weakened when they learned that the Soviet had categorically refused to assume power. The moderate Socialists still held the majority in this council and were unwilling to engage in the adventure advocated by the extremists. On the following day troops still faithful to the Government entered the city and all hope of the struggle being resumed was relinquished for the moment.

The defeat of the insurrection immediately diminished the prestige of the Bolsheviks in the eyes of the masses who had so willingly taken them as guides. This set-back was accentuated by documents published in the newspapers, attesting that the Bolsheviks were receiving financial aid from Germany.[1] During the night of July 19th–20th bad news arrived from the front. The recently ordered offensive had completely failed and ended in a disorderly flight of the disbanded soldiers. This failure demonstrated even to the most hesitating the necessity for a determined struggle against the Bolsheviks. The relations of cause and effect between the Bolshevik agitation and the disorganization of the army were too evident to allow any doubt as to where lay the responsibility for the disasters at the front.

1 This information was furnished by a sub-lieutenant named Ermolenko, who had been made prisoner by the Germans and sent back to Russia "to support an agitation in favour of the rapid conclusion of peace." Ermolenko denounced the liaison of Lenin with the German General Staff. He told in detail the manner in which cash subsidies from Berlin were sent to St. Petersburg by way of Stockholm. The names of the intermediaries were also published. These were alleged to have been Jacob Furstenberg and Parvus-Helfant in Stockholm, and a barrister named Kozlovsky in St. Petersburg. Subsequently, after the Bolshevik victory, this information was completed. Ludendorff, the German Grand Quartermaster-General, states plainly in his *Memoirs* that the German General Staff facilitated the return of Lenin to Russia.

Increased Prestige of the Provisional Government

In these conditions it became easier for Kerensky to obtain the Soviet's consent to support him in his struggle with all "counter-revolutionary and anarchist attempts" against the Revolution. Lenin and Zinoviev had time to take flight, but Trotsky and Kamenev, the other two Bolshevik leaders, were imprisoned. The Kronstadt sailors had to give up their ringleaders. The population received orders to hand over to the authorities all arms in their possession. Distribution of Bolshevik literature in the army was prohibited. Comparatively moderate organizations, such as the Union of Officers and the Union of Commerce and Industry, were allowed to function openly for the first time since the Revolution. All these were instances of the growth of the Government's prestige.

It is, of course, difficult to say whether these steps would have resulted in bringing about a more or less stable situation, or if the calm which was foreshadowed would have been only the lull before another storm. Signs of better conditions were accompanied by numerous alarming symptoms. Things were not going well at the front. The Ministerial crisis was still pending. Kerensky ended, however, by obtaining from the representatives of the Socialist Parties, as well as from the principal organized bodies throughout the country, the mandate to constitute a new Ministry, which went into office on July 25th as the Second Coalition Government.

The Second Coalition Cabinet

In this new Coalition Government the co-operation of the different parties was still more fictitious than in the preceding one. Kerensky occupied both the post of Premier and that of Minister for War and Marine. His personal authority excluded all rivalry. The bourgeois wing of the Government was doomed to be only a passive factor. What is more, the split between the Socialist and the bourgeois wings of the democratic elements now made itself strongly felt throughout the country. At the State Conference, which took place at Moscow from August 25th to September 7th, the representatives of the Socialist and of the bourgeois organizations met as recognized antagonists.

The Government, in spite of the immense difficulties which lay before it, manifestly sought to increase its power in the supreme interest of the nation. An appeal to the people, which appeared

over Kerensky's signature, urged that "all dissensions should be forgotten in face of the enemy and of the military danger," and that it was indispensable to endow the Government with a "power of iron" in order to save the country by heroic efforts.

A strong Government was all the more necessary in view of the fact that since the July rising, the Bolsheviks had definitely thrown off the mask. Lenin wrote: "Before July 17th the peaceful surrender of power to the Soviet was still possible . . . but to-day the pacific development of the Revolution has become impossible in Russia. Henceforth history presents the following dilemma: absolute triumph of the counter-revolution, or a fresh revolution."

Kornilov's Action

Among the adversaries of the Bolsheviks were many people who doubted whether the Government was really capable of reversing the course of events and developing power that would actually be respected. In any case, this would demand a certain length of time. General Kornilov, who had recently been appointed commander-in-chief, was one of those who nourished such doubts. A soldier of indomitable courage and a sincere democrat, but completely ignorant of politics, Kornilov decided to intervene in events by relying on armed force for support. The Government had just been weakened by a fresh crisis. On September 8th, the eve of Kornilov's march on St. Petersburg, most of the bourgeois Ministers had resigned, and the power had been concentrated in the hands of a "directory" of five. Kornilov's plan, however, failed. The troops which he had despatched to the capital dispersed before reaching it, having been demoralized by agitators sent to meet them on their way. By September 14th Kornilov had been arrested as well as his partisans, Generals Denikin, Markov, Erdeli, etc. Kornilov had wished to strike a great blow in order to arrest the downfall of the country. His plan had been especially directed against the Bolshevik centres, but he failed to make any very clear distinction between the troops of Lenin and those of the Socialists sincerely attached to democratic principles.

Intensification of Bolshevik Tendencies

After the check to Kornilov's attempt, which was badly conceived and insufficiently organized, the struggle of the Government against

the influence of the Bolsheviks and their disintegrating slogans became much more difficult. During the Kornilov incident, the Bolsheviks had lent the Government a considerable amount of help. They were well aware that the victory of Kornilov would mean their ruin, and they employed all their energy to prevent his success. These tactics not only enabled them to openly resume their past activity, but to thrust themselves still more into prominence.

The middle of September marked the veritable death struggle of the governmental power. On the 13th of the month the Bolsheviks won their first success in the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. A motion proposed by the former Soviet leader, Tzeretelli, in favour of the formation of a new Coalition Government, was rejected. A resolution drawn up by the Bolsheviks demanding the constitution of a government of workmen and peasants, and the handing over, to that effect, of full powers to the Soviets, was adopted by a majority of 279 votes against 115, with 51 abstentions. As a result, the majority which the Bolsheviks had now secured in the Soviet became still stronger.

The Last Coalition Government

In order to find a solution of the governmental crisis, a "Democratic Conference" met at Moscow at the end of September. After long debates a programme of action was drawn up, and a third Coalition Government was designated, with the mission of carrying it out. This Cabinet was fated to be overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks Prepare for a Coup d'État

On October 8th, the very day of the formation of the new Ministry, Leon Trotsky was elected president of the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies; and on October 23rd the Bolshevik Central Committee adopted a resolution urging the immediate organization of an armed insurrection. This motion, which was subsequently described by the Bolsheviks as "historical," ran as follows: "The Central Committee recognizes that the international role of the Russian Revolution, the state of the war, and the majority conquered by the Proletarian Party in the Soviets, as well as the insurrection among the peasants, and the increasing confidence of the people in our party have made the armed revolt of the country imperative. Thus acknowledging that the armed rising

is inevitable, and that all elements are ripe for it, the Central Committee calls on all the organizations of the party to conform to this resolution in all the questions of immediate tactics."[1]

Bolshevik Insurrection of November 7th

The Bolshevik insurrection broke out on November 7th. Kerensky was obliged to recognize at once that the Government had no materially effective force at its command in St. Petersburg, notwithstanding the sympathy and the confidence which it still enjoyed among the majority of the democratic institutions and organizations. The Cossacks alone were in a position to sustain it effectively, but they wished first of all to know what other means of action the Government could rely on. They also insisted, moreover, on the personal guarantee of Kerensky that, on this occasion, Cossack blood "would not be shed in vain," as had been the case during the rising in July. Their interview with the Prime Minister apparently failed to give them entire satisfaction, and after having sat all night the council of the Cossack Armies ended by deciding not to take part in the struggle between the Government and the Bolsheviks. In these circumstances Kerensky thought best to leave the capital in order to fetch troops from the front. In his absence the Government sat *en permanence* in the Winter Palace under the protection of an insignificant military guard. Arguing that they could hand over power only to the Constituent Assembly, the Ministers firmly refused to yield to the summonses of the Bolsheviks.

The insurgents, reinforced from the riverside by the cruiser *Aurora*, forced an entrance into the palace in the evening, and arrested the members of the Ministry present there. The latter were taken to the Peter and Paul Fortress, where they joined several of the Tsar's Ministers, who had been imprisoned since the revolution in March.

The Tragedy of the March Revolution

The men of the March Revolution had sought to establish a democratic régime in Russia. The country's past, no doubt, afforded

1 Lenin, Stalin, Uritsky, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, Bubnov, Sokolnikov, Lomov, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky participated in this "historic meeting" of October 23, 1917. The motion was adopted unanimously, with the exception of Kamenev and Zinoviev, who voted against it, believing that the insurrection was doomed to failure.

premises from which the feasibility of such a development could be inferred. The evolution of recent decades had seemed to favour the realization of this achievement, but history once more proved what a supremely difficult task is the organization of liberty.

It is true that, under the conditions prevailing at that time in Russia, the attempt to set up democracy encountered exceptionally serious obstacles and therein lay the tragedy of the March Revolution. On the other hand, these same circumstances greatly facilitated the establishment of an authoritative and demagogic régime under the cloak of democracy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Bolsheviks eventually triumphed over the Russian intellectual democrats.

The troops which Kerensky went to seek at the front, a few hours before the fall of the Provisional Government, never reached St. Petersburg. The entire country certainly did not immediately and docilely submit to the victorious party. During the three years which followed the Bolshevik *coup d'état* Russia flamed with civil war. All the courage displayed by the "Whites" did not prevent the "Reds" from triumphing; for at that period the masses were still drunk with revolutionary illusions. They had not yet experienced the bitter disappointment that Bolshevik promises were to bring them. Moreover, neither by their programme nor by the methods of administration applied in the territories they occupied, were the "Whites" able to dissipate the prejudices of the people or gain their sympathy and their confidence. During the entire civil war, the peasants and the workers saw in the "White" movement only their old master, desirous solely of restoring the fallen régime and of recovering the lands and the factories of which the Revolution had deprived them.

Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly

The victory of November, 1917, proved lasting. After having crushed democracy, the Bolsheviks resolutely and irrevocably repudiated many principles which, in its century-old fight for the political and social enfranchisement of the people, the Russian *intelligentzia* had always considered as an indisputable moral and political creed. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was one of the first and most striking steps of this repudiation. In that Assembly, which had been elected by universal suffrage—direct, equal and secret, with application of proportional representation—

the Bolsheviks were in the minority.[1] They had not the audacity, however, to annul the elections. Soon after the *coup d'état*, Lenin attempted to suggest the postponement of the polls, but his most intimate partisans refused to follow him on this point. "The masses will not understand our adjournment of these elections," Bukharin told him, "after our having for the last six weeks concentrated all our efforts on assuring the convocation of the Constituent Assembly as soon as possible."[2] Lenin allowed himself to be convinced, for at that time he hoped the Bolsheviks would secure a majority in the country.[3] In any case, Lenin had already decided on the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly even before it met. In the nineteen *Theses on the Constituent Assembly*, which he published on January 8, 1918, he wrote that the only chance the Assembly might have of being tolerated was "to recognize explicitly and without reserve the Soviet Power and the Soviet Revolution." This was an ultimatum. It was clear, however, that by virtue of their political opinions the deputies who formed the majority of the Assembly would not be willing to engage in the road on which Lenin was pushing them. The fate of the Constituent Assembly was therefore decided in advance. It lived only a single day, that of January 18, 1918.

From the opening of this Assembly, the Bolshevik Bukharin declared that the deputies formed two irreconcilable camps: the Bolsheviks, with their "will for the dictatorship of the working classes, for the dictatorial conquest of political power," and the others who did not know better than to defend the "detestable bourgeois Parliamentary Republic." "From the height of this platform," Bukharin concluded, "we declare war without mercy against the bourgeois Parliamentary Republic." After these words the Bolshevik faction read a declaration stating that "the present counter-revolutionary majority of the Constituent Assembly has been elected with out-of-date voters lists, that it represents a stage already passed by the Revolution, and that it attempts to block the road before the workmen's and peasants' movement . . ."[4] With

1 The Constituent Assembly was composed of 417 *Socialist-Revolutionaries*, 175 Bolsheviks, 64 representatives of the bourgeois parties, and 34 *Social-Democrats*.

2 Minutes of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Party, August 1917–February 1918, p. 182.

3 *Rabotchi Pout* ("The Workers' Path"), No. 30.

4 The text of this declaration was composed by Lenin himself. (See his *Complete Works*, vol. xxii, pp. 180 and 181.) All quotations from Lenin, Stalin, Bukharin, etc., are throughout this book directly translated by the author from the Russian original text, and all references are to pages in the Russian editions.

this the Bolsheviks left the Assembly. Late during the night, the sailor Zhelezniakov, who was in command of the guard, ordered the deputies to leave the hall, as his men were very "tired."

The Traditions of Russian Liberation Movement Ruined

In its collapse the Revolution of 1917 crushed the living forces of the country, which had welcomed its birth with the highest hopes. Its epilogue in November was a definite denial of the traditions which, since the days of Radischev and the *Decembrists*, the Russian intellectual democrats had cherished throughout their long social and political struggles. It was akin, on the other hand, to old Russia with its instinctive revolts. The Bolshevik *coup d'état* did not draw its inspiration from the burning idealism of the Russian liberation movement, but from the ferocious enmity of the disinherited for all that surpasses him, or from what Lenin called "class hatred."

CHAPTER III

The Essence of Bolshevism

Revolutionary Movement of 1860 to 1880

The Russian revolutionary movement, until about 1880, had one striking peculiarity. However profound might have been the difference between the various currents of the movement, they all were unanimous in considering that Russia was following an evolutionary development of her own, entirely distinct from that of other European countries. The theorists of the advanced parties held that capitalism and its corollary, the revolutionary proletariat, existed only in Europe. To their minds, neither capitalism nor a proletariat existed in Russia, but a peasant class, which lived under the régime of the agrarian commune. Their belief was that the system of communal possession of the land must be the possible starting-point of the reorganization of the whole society on a socialistic basis. In Western Europe, on the contrary, there were as yet no signs of Socialism being practically applied. This explained, the theorists said, why Russia, in spite of its apparent backwardness, was much nearer to Socialism than the industrialized West. There was no need, therefore, for her to copy the Western countries, either by implanting capitalism within her frontiers, or by submitting to the predominance of the bourgeoisie. Russia must in no case destroy the peasant community. On the contrary, in her evolution, she must avoid the capitalist phase, elude the bourgeois régime, develop the communist tendencies inherent in the peasant community, and pass directly from autocracy to Socialism.

Imbued by these principles, the Populist revolutionaries held that they were not called on to fight for a constitutional régime, as that would be contrary to the real interests of Russia.[1]

1 "We have no need of a constitutional régime," said the clandestine journal *Land and Liberty* in 1878. "Any kind of constitution would benefit only the privileged classes of landowners, traders, manufacturers, and holders of realty and other forms of capital; i.e. the bourgeoisie, in the economic sense of the term. At

Lessons of Life

But sooner or later, it seems, the lessons of life were destined to shake this conviction, which had appeared firmly established in Russian revolutionary and radical minds. Every passing decade rendered more evident the facts that Russia was evolving on European lines and that her economy was more and more adopting the capitalist form. The period from 1860 to 1880, which corresponded to the epoch of Alexander II's Great Reforms, awakened among the Russians the spirit of energy and individual initiatives in the most varied fields, and markedly in the country's economic life. In that lies a notable fact, which enables us to trace a very clear line of demarcation between the Russia that existed prior to the Great Reforms and the new europeanized Russia.

At the beginning the leaders of the revolutionary movement hoped that their propaganda and their "direct action" would soon raise the tide of the vast peasant masses. Tkăchev, who was known for the violence of his agitation, and other revolutionaries of the time were profoundly convinced that the Russian people were already ripe for a social upheaval, and that, in order to start such a revolution, it would "suffice to awaken simultaneously, and in many directions, the anger and the discontent which had accumulated in the soul of the people and had for so long been working in them." The Russian revolutionary movement, which had begun towards 1860, reached its height between 1870 and 1875, when the intellectuals "went to the people" with heroic abnegation. As the years went by, however, it became evident that this movement merely amounted to an unequal and hopeless fight between the little terrorist group called "The Will of the People" and the mighty autocracy. The Russian peasant, which the revolutionary partisans imagined would be a willing rioter and Socialist, remained obstinately deaf to seditious propaganda.

present these elements are divided and consequently impotent; but constitutional liberty, precarious as it might be, would enable them to unite in a powerful party." The experience of the Western countries having proved that the agrarian commune cannot exist under a bourgeois régime, a Russia which tends towards Socialism must avoid the bourgeois régime at any cost, otherwise the latter will destroy the commune and therefore delay the advent of Socialism in Russia. "We see," wrote the Populist writer Chernyshevsky in 1857, "the dire consequences which, in the West, have resulted from the disappearance of peasant communal property, and the difficulty of the European peoples to compensate for this loss. The lesson offered by Europe must not be missed by us."

Political Reaction

The Government of Alexander II had felt the need of making some concessions to liberalism. Alexander III on his accession to the throne, determined to call a halt to such a course, and even revoked a part of what had already been conceded. There followed a period characterized by political and social reaction. Everybody realized that the country could no longer hope for "a spring of constitutional reforms," and that, on the contrary, a long and severe Russian winter was about to begin. Katkov, one of the most brilliant apologists of absolutism, hailed the advent of Alexander III with the words: "Rise, gentlemen; autocracy has come back!"

New Questions

In order to find satisfactory replies to the doubts which they had begun to entertain as to their preceding conceptions, the Socialist intellectuals had to ask themselves afresh these four essential questions:

(1) Was it true that Russia was following a path of her own, and that capitalism was not developing, and could not and must not develop in Russia?

(2) Was it true that Russia could avoid the intermediary phase of a bourgeois régime, and pass direct to a Socialist one?

(3) Was it true that, as Chernychevski said, the Russian peasant commune represented that "sacred and salving tradition" which brought Russia much nearer to Socialism than the Western peoples?

(4) Was it true that the peasant class constituted the form on which the revolutionary intellectuals must rely, if they wished to overthrow Tsarism and at the same time to establish a socialistic régime?

Birth of Russian Marxism

Marxism, the Socialist doctrine which at that period predominated in the Western countries, gave a reply to these "cursed questions." The first apostles of Marxism in Russia had been three political exiles: Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Vera Zassulich, who organized at Geneva, at the beginning of the eighties, the "Emancipation of Labour" group. All three had formerly belonged to the Populist

movement and had been among those who attempted to carry on direct propaganda among the people. They had believed in the socialistic character of the agrarian commune, as well as in the theory that Russia, owing to her peculiar evolution, was destined to pass direct into a socialistic régime, without experiencing the intermediate phase of bourgeois capitalism. Their study of Marxism and of the Labour movement abroad had upset their earlier conceptions. Soon afterwards, Plekhanov published his first books: *Socialism and the Political Struggle* (1883), and *Our Differences of Opinion* (1884)—and the youthful Lenin happened to read them some years later, at Samara, on the Volga. In the Russian books published at Geneva he found a reply to the revolutionary problem which had disturbed him. Twenty-five years later events suddenly occurred which the most daring fancy would not have been able to imagine: in 1917 Marxism became the official religion of a vast State, the U.S.S.R., occupying one-sixth of the land surface of the globe.

Plekhanov's Conception

What was, then, this new message which had the effect of a bomb on the world of Russian thought, still impregnated with the Populist ideas? Plekhanov declared that it was time to get rid for ever of the conception that Russia must follow, in its development, a different road from that of the Western countries.[1] He demonstrated that it was too late to ask if Russia must or must not "pass through the school of capitalism." She had already entered it. In fact, if household economy still remained dominant, very plain indications of an industrial era in Russia were already visible. Plekhanov declared further that the Russian commune, so dear to the Populists, was for the Socialists a much less sacred thing. He showed that the commune was merely an institution maintained by the Government for fiscal purposes, because it furnished the possibility of rendering the peasants collectively and severally responsible for the payment of the taxes. Moreover, he insisted, since the development of an economy based on money and trade, the commune was in course of decom-

1 Long before Plekhanov, the "Westerners," in the controversy in which they were engaged with the "Slavophils" on problems of the philosophy of history, had maintained that Russia was to follow, in the political and cultural domain, the same path as Western Europe. The novelty in Plekhanov's conception was the extension of the Westerners' view to the field of economics. Fuller details about the Westerners and the Slavophils will be found in the Appendix.

position and was giving birth to two antagonistic elements: a village bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat.[1]

Analysis of social relationships created by capitalism having shown him that these had resulted in the rise of the working classes in Russia, as everywhere else, Plekhanov abandoned the Populist theory of the socialistic predisposition of the Russian peasant. He demonstrated that the principal basis of the Socialist movement was to be found in the factories, and not in the agrarian communes; in other words, among the workmen, and not among the peasants. Replying to the Populists, who dreamed of seizing power, in order to suppress economic inequality forthwith, Plekhanov wrote in 1883, in his study *Socialism and the Political Struggle*:

"After having seized power, the Revolutionary Socialist Government must organize national production. It will then have to face this dilemma: either to take its inspiration from modern Socialism —in which case its lack of practical spirit as well as the insufficient advancement and the habits of the workers will make it impossible to follow this course—or to seek an issue in the ideals of patriarchal and authoritative Communism, by modernizing it only to the extent that the socialized production will be controlled by a Socialist caste, instead of by the 'Sons of the Sun,' and their functionaries, as in ancient Peru.[2] The Russian people, however, is already too evolved to allow anybody to successfully attempt such experiments at its expense. Such Peruvian tutelage, further, would never succeed in initiating the Russian people into Socialism. On the contrary, it would cause them to lose all faculty of progressing, unless they return to the same economic inequality, the suppression of which should have been the immediate object of the Revolutionary Government. And we say nothing of the play of international complications, or of the impossibility of establishing, in the XIXth or XXth Century, a Communism after the Peruvian style, even in Eastern Europe."

Lenin, recognizing the talent and the clarity of the revolutionary

1 Fifteen years after Plekhanov's book appeared, and by following the way opened by him, Lenin took up the same ideas, and developed them in a book filled with statistics, which he entitled *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. This work had been commenced when the author was in prison in St. Petersburg. It appeared in 1899, under the pseudonym of "V. Iliine." At that time Lenin was exiled in the village of Shoushinsk, in the Ienisseï province, in Eastern Siberia.

2 The empire of the Incas—which existed for several centuries, prior to the conquest by the Spaniards, in the XVIth century—was ruled by absolute monarchs, who were considered as the sons of the Sun, and was organized on the basis of integral State Socialism of a pronounced theocratic and bureaucratic character.

thought of the Genevan exile, adopted the idea that it would be impossible to elude the bourgeois phase in Russian social evolution. He long remained faithful to that conception.[1]

Marxism and the Intellectuals. The "Legal" Marxists

The new ideas formulated by Plekhanov, at the beginning of the eighties, on political problems and on economic development, penetrated into Russia during the following decade and enjoyed an immense success among the intellectuals.[2]

By the end of the XIXth century Marxism had a good many followers among the revolutionary youth, and its imprint is to be found in the scientific literature of the period.

A certain number of Marxists expounded and openly defended their economic doctrine in the legal Press. Others professed it from their university chairs. All these were given the name of "legal Marxists," to distinguish them from the "illegal" Marxists who were implicated in clandestine activities. One of the first of the "legal Marxists," Peter Struve, published his *Critical Notes on the Economic Development of Russia* (1894), in which he invited his readers to recognize "our backward state of culture" and to put themselves to the "school of capitalism." Professor Tugan-Baranovsky published

1 Subsequently, master and pupil found themselves in opposite camps. In 1917, when the autocracy was overthrown and the way opened for a democratic-bourgeois régime in Russia, Lenin urged his partisans to take power immediately with the object of "starting at full speed towards Socialism." In Plekhanov's eyes Lenin was now no more than an anarchist, an instigator of the Peruvian system of the "Sons of the Sun." In the eyes of Lenin, Plekhanov had become merely a social-patriot, a cowardly renegade, who had gone over to the service of the imperialist-bourgeois camp.

2 The rapid propagation of Marxism in Russia does not signify that towards the end of the XIXth century this doctrine exclusively dominated the minds of all Russian intellectuals of revolutionary tendencies. Although it had assimilated certain elements of Russian Marxism, Populism survived until 1917, and even beyond that date. On the morrow of their victory, the Bolsheviks themselves admitted that in the past Populism had been one of the principal ideological adversaries of Marxism. In 1920, when Lenin celebrated his fiftieth birthday, Mme. Stassov presented him with a caricature, drawn by Carrick, in 1900, on the occasion of a reception in honour of the Populist sociologist Mikhailovsky, the "master of thought" of that period. Mikhailovsky's duel with the Marxian *Social-Democrats* was a burning topic among the intellectuals. In this caricature he was represented as a giant, to whom Marxists in the guise of children were offering an address. Mme. Stassov, when sending the sketch to Lenin, accompanied it with a letter, in which she said: "Do you remember that time? Our party was, in fact, in its infancy, and we could hardly be described as numerous. To-day we are in power! This has been your work, the work of your intelligence and your talent."

a work called *The Russian Factory*, while Bulgakov, another Marxist who occupied a university chair, wrote a study on *The Markets under the Capitalist Production Regime*, etc.

All the "legal" Marxists felt ideologically and morally bound to the universal labour movement, and to the Marxists, described as "illegal," who devoted themselves to subterranean revolutionary propaganda. Thus it was Struve who drew up in 1898 the first manifesto of the Russian *Social-Democratic* Party. The union between legal and illegal Marxists, however, was soon broken. Two years after the publication of the manifesto in question, Struve openly broke off relations with Marxism, in order to go abroad and found the review *Liberation*, the organ of democratic liberalism. Bulgakov and Berdiaev, both theorists of economic materialism, became philosophical exponents of the Greek Orthodox religion.[1]

It was not the departure of these gifted and highly cultured men, however, which exercised a decisive influence on the ulterior evolution of Russian Marxism, but the scission which occurred in the ranks of the *Social-Democratic* Party, when it split into two fractions, the Bolsheviks and the *Mensheviks*.

The Social-Democrats

When Struve drew up the Party manifesto in 1898, little groups of *Social-Democrats*, small in numbers and without connecting links, were scattered among various Russian towns. These groups—or committees, as they were called—devoted themselves to organize propaganda cells among students and workers. They issued mimeographed proclamations and sought to provoke and lead strikes, but the police soon discovered them, and their members were sent to prison or banished to Siberia. The movement lacked strength, co-ordination, and continuity of action. It was at this juncture that Lenin began to organize the Party. He undertook to instruct,

1 It is interesting to note that Lenin seems to have foreseen this breach. He was unable, of course, to state the real reasons for it, for he failed to see in it a natural reaction against the narrowness of materialistic thought, and the wish to escape from it into the wider expanse of idealism. One of Lenin's first essays was an article on a book by Struve. This was published in a collection of *Documents on the features of our Economic Development* (1895). In this he declared that Struve and the other legal Marxists were less interested in the revolutionary problems of the Russian proletariat than in the Progressist tendencies of the bourgeois evolution. At this period Lenin was writing under the name of "Toulin" and employing the veiled language which the Marxists then used to evade the Tsarist censors.

increase, and weld together the various *Social-Democratic* groups by means of a single programme and uniform tactics, all under a centralized direction. Lenin, Martov, and Potressov (Starover), who represented the second generation of *Social-Democrats* and had been deported, their term of banishment having expired, betook themselves in 1900 to Munich and Geneva, where they joined their elder colleagues—Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Zassulich. These six leaders became the focus of Russian *Social-Democracy* and the most active and powerful centres of revolutionary preparation.[1]

They jointly edited in Geneva a militant paper called *The Spark* (*Iskra*), which bore on its front page the prophetic motto: "The spark lights the fire."

Social-Democratic Congress of 1903

In order to consolidate the Party, the *Spark* group in 1903 called in a Congress of all the secret *Social-Democratic* groups. This Congress, which met abroad, was nominally the second, but in point of fact the first constitutive gathering of the Party. It was impatiently awaited by all Russian *Social-Democratic* groups and met first in Brussels, then moved to London and sat for about a month. After its closing it had to be acknowledged that, notwithstanding the adoption of a common programme drawn up by the *Spark* and the election of a single central committee, true unity was by no means achieved.

The Split

In the heated atmosphere of the Congress, torn by passionate discussions and surprise votes, two opposing tendencies came to light, the one sponsored by Plekhanov and Lenin, the other by Martov, Potressov, Axelrod, Zassulich and the young Trotsky. Soon after the Congress Plekhanov in his turn broke with Lenin. The latter

1 The well-known Russian radical thinker and writer Alexander Herzen had said that "Revolution, like Saturn, devours its children." When, seventeen years later, the long-awaited triumph of the Revolution carried Lenin on the crest of its wave, the lot of his five former comrades was indeed tragic. Thrown out by revolution which went Lenin's way and not theirs, they were destined to languish in prison, and three of them were to die in exile where they had spent a large part of their lives before the upheaval; for they had the misfortune to be *Mensheviks*, and this is how Lenin referred to them: "The *Mensheviks* and *Socialists-Revolutionaries*, whether open or disguised as non-party men, deserve nothing better than prison." (Speech delivered on April 9, 1921. Lenin's *Collected Works*, vol. xxvi, p. 248.)

remained apart from the Central Committee and the *Spark*, which in his eyes had lost its former virtue and became, as he contemptuously put it, "the new opportunist *Spark*." Lenin then founded a separate organization of his own which subsequently adopted the name of the Bolshevik Party.

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

On a number of issues raised at the Congress, the majority had voted with Lenin against Martov and his friends, who were thus left in a minority. This resulted in the coining of two new words, Bolsheviks and *Mensheviks*—or Majoritarians and Minoritarians—of which the former was destined to echo all over the world. "Bolshevism has existed since 1903, as a school of thought and as a party."[1]

What was the cause of this split within the Russian *Social-Democratic* Party? At a first glance it was due to a mere quibble. When the first article of the Party statutes was being discussed, the *Mensheviks*, led by Martov, suggested the following wording: "A person is regarded as a member of the Russian Workers' *Social-Democratic* Party if he adheres to its programme, affords it material assistance, and gives it constant personal support under the direction of one of its organizations." Lenin and his followers introduced, on the other hand, the following formula: "A person is regarded as a member of the Party if he adheres to its programme, affords it material assistance, and personally participates in one of its organizations."

The whole difference thus lay in the words: "personal support" and "personal participation." This would seem to be a purely scholastic distinction. But behind this quarrel about words there existed a deep-seated conflict, a psychological clash of two types of politicians. Lenin knew what he wanted when he demanded from every *Social-Democrat* that they should personally participate in the party organization, and perform definite tasks within it.

In creating the Russian Bolshevik Communist Party, Lenin did not model it on the customary type of European political parties. He instituted, under his own leadership, a kind of militant sect whose members were convinced that they were the only depositaries of absolute truth in the wide world.

1 Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. xxv, p. 174. In 1918 Lenin substituted the name of Communist Party for that of Bolshevik.

Dialectical Materialism

Every Bolshevik must profess dialectical materialism or, in other words, the materialist philosophy evolved by Karl Marx within the framework of Hegel's system of logic.

This doctrine, which ultimately reduces every interpretation of historical events to economic causes, was first formulated by Karl Marx in the early forties of last century. It is thus nearly a hundred years old.

Himself a Left-Wing Hegelian, Karl Marx preserved Hegel's belief in the dialectical development of history, but erected it on an economic basis. Marx taught that it is not ideas which rule the world and transform social and economic relations, but that the history of mankind is determined by the evolution of the methods of production, their changes bringing about an evolution of ideas. "Every mode of production determines the condition of social, political, and spiritual life." Moreover, all changes of social relations operate in accordance with Hegel's logic, that is they pass from thesis to antithesis and then to synthesis. Thus, according to Marx, any economic system must of necessity and by virtue of its own development lead to its own negation. That is why capitalism, in the course of its evolution, must inevitably engender economic forms and social forces which will bring about its downfall.

In the Communist manifesto drawn up by Marx and Engels in 1848, the substance of economic materialism is expounded in the following terms: "The history of all existing communities is reduced to a struggle of classes. . . . All ideas about life and the world change with the changes in modes of living, social position, and environment. The dominant ideas of any period are always those of the ruling class." When man's power over Nature, or in other words technique, reaches a certain stage of development, "the material forces of production at society's disposal"—says Marx in his *Critic of Political Economy* (1859)—"enter into conflict with the contemporary relations between the production factors or—which is only the juridical way of expressing the same thing—with the modes of organization of property. These property relations, after having furthered the development of productive forces, end by thwarting them. While the economic foundation of society (expressed in terms of property relations) is being transformed, with it changes, more or less rapidly, the whole immense structure erected upon it"—in

other words the entire organization of society and the whole of its intellectual life. "An era of social upheaval then opens."

These ideas underlie all the economic materialism which its followers regard as a "scientific" interpretation of history, as opposed to the idealistic and unscientific one. According to Engels, Hegel's merit was "in being the first to present the historical and spiritual world in its evolutionary aspect"; but, added Engels, Hegel did not understand that the real nature of this evolution was purely material. "The fundamental causes of social changes and political upheavals must be looked for not in the human mind, but in the transformation of the means of production and exchange; not in the philosophical systems, but in the economic régime of a given period." It is, according to Marx and Engels, the proletariat—otherwise the working class, which lives on its wages—that constitutes the dynamic force destined to overthrow capitalism when the moment for its disappearance arrives. Whereas the capitalists, according to Marx, do not pay the workers in proportion to the labour supplied by them, derive their profits from the spoliation of the working class and base their well-being on the exploitation of the latter,—the proletariat develops simultaneously with capitalism, increasing in numbers, in social importance, and in organization. It is only a question of time when the working class will become the decisive factor in society. At that moment capitalism will break down and the exploitation of labour will cease. "The expropriators will be in their turn expropriated." The means of production will become the property of the entire community and everyone will have the full benefit of his labour. This result is just as inevitable as the growing tendency of the proletariat towards Revolution. According to the Communist Manifesto, the workman has nothing to lose but his chains; he has a world to win.

Bolsheviks make Dialectical Materialism into a Religious Dogma

All Marxists accept this historico-philosophical interpretation of the evolution of human society; it is shared both by the Bolsheviks and the *Mensheviks*; but in the eyes of the Bolsheviks, dialectical materialism (called nowadays in Russia *diamat* in keeping with the prevailing fashion for syllabic abbreviations) is something more than a method devised to explain historical evolution: it has been raised to the rank of a religious dogma which every member of

the Communist Party is bound to profess. In the Soviet State it is the official religion taught in schools just as the catechism used to be in the old days. Every member of the Party must adhere unreservedly to the principles of *diamat.* What is more, the State does not tolerate within its limits any other philosophical, political, or religious conception.

Only the Middle Ages, with their Church militant and the bonfires of the Inquisition kindled *ad majorem Dei gloriam* and for the salvation of heretics, can convey to anyone who has not lived under the Soviet régime, or is not its partisan, any conception of the tyranny exercised by this totalitarian doctrine, this "ideocracy," so typical of the spiritual essence of Bolshevism.

Even nowadays when veneration for the doctrine seems to have greatly decreased in the minds of the Bolshevik chiefs, the profession of this dogma, at least outwardly and formally, remains compulsory for all members of the Party.

Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism

The teaching of Marx and Engels still determines the official theory of Bolshevism; but as time went on, the animators of Russian Communism introduced numerous supplements and commentaries into the doctrines of their German masters. Every orthodox Bolshevik must perforce profess the same unconditional faith in these supplements and commentaries as in the teachings of the founders of Marxism. In Lenin's time, from 1917 to 1924, the Soviet dogma took the official name of "Marxism-Leninism"; to-day it is known, just as officially, as "Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism," but the second link in this triple term shows an obvious tendency to fade away.

Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism are of course quite different from Marxism pure and simple. According to Marxist theory the substitution for capitalism of "its opposite," i.e. of Socialism, should be first of all effected in the most highly industrialized countries, possessing the most developed capitalist régime. According to Marx, likewise, the establishment of Socialism in one single country is impossible, be it solely for the reason of the international character of capitalism. The collapse of capitalism will be real and final only when it occurs simultaneously in all the highly developed industrial States.

Lenin, on the other hand, who believed in the imminent advent of the World Socialist Revolution, begun his experiment in a

country which he admitted to be economically backward, and proclaimed there "the dictatorship of the proletariat" despite the fact that 80 per cent of the population were peasants. Stalin went still further in his interpretation of the Marxian doctrine. Having come to the conclusion that the prospect of a World Revolution receded more and more, he proclaimed that it was possible "to build up Socialism in one country alone," even in one as backward as Russia. According to Marx's theory the development of the economic system precedes any modification in the social structure. Disregarding this postulate Stalin availed himself of the political control he exercised to attempt the arbitrary transformation of Russia's economic structure in order to establish Socialism. Hence his frenzied endeavour to industrialize the country and to introduce at the same time "Socialist" modes of production in agriculture which economically was the least ripe for their application. The Lenin-Stalin innovations brought to the theories of Marx and Engels did not deal solely with the question of the immediate establishment of Socialism in Russia. Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism is an amalgam of theoretical views, of programme items, of principles of organization, and of tactical precepts. Every Communist must embrace in its entirety this creed, many of whose articles change constantly under the orders of an infallible dictator. Any deviation therefrom or even the slightest hint of doubt involves immediate reprisals.[1]

Thus, although the *diamat* continued to be the creed, no more of the pure doctrine of its creator remained in it than that of the genuine Christian spirit did in the practices of the medieval Inquisition. One cannot, however, deny to the fanatical adherents of Bolshevism a certain dose of idealism, such as is found in social reformers of all countries and at all times, and even among the Spanish Inquisitors. It is their fanatical faith which is responsible for that implacable rigour, that deliberate cruelty and that violence, with which they seek to enforce the reconstruction of society on Socialist foundations and to create a new "collective man."

1 No wonder that not only Plekhanov, the founder of Russian Marxism, but even Karl Kautsky, that authorized and loyal commentator of Marx and Engels, had become renegades in Lenin's eyes. Trotsky went so far as to say in 1904 that if Lenin's Jacobinism were to triumph "the leonine head of Marx would be the first to fall under the knife of the guillotine." (Trotsky, *Our Political Problems*, Geneva, 1904, p. 95.) Stalin subsequently denounced nearly all Lenin's closest collaborators as heretics, and had them suppressed by means of the trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938.

Continual Changes in the Communist Programme

The Russian Communist Party differs from ordinary political bodies just as much by the rigidity of its doctrines as by the extreme instability of its immediate programme. True, its maximum programme still embraces the world triumph of Socialism; but, in the minds of the Soviet chiefs, this final goal at one moment appears as if in process of a speedy realization; at another it is relegated to a distant future. As to the immediate programme, it is liable to continuous and extensive change. If we were to ask what was the programme, for whose fulfilment the Bolsheviks had fought their way to power, and for which they actually exercised it afterwards, it will be seen that already since 1903, the date of the foundation of their Party, they themselves have given absolutely contradictory replies to this question.

Lenin Denied in 1905 the Possibility of Establishing Socialism in Russia

"We reject"—Lenin wrote during the revolutionary disturbances of 1905—"the absurd, semi-anarchist idea of an immediate fulfilment of our maximum programme and of a seizure of power with a view to a socialist revolution. The degree of Russia's economic development—an objective condition—together with the degree of organization of the wide proletarian masses—a subjective condition indissolubly bound up with the former—render impossible the total and immediate emancipation of the working class. Only ignorant people fail to see the bourgeois character of the democratic transformation going on at present. To wish to attain Socialism by other ways, without passing through the stage of political democracy, is merely to arrive at ridiculous and reactionary conclusions, in the political as well as in the economic fields."[1]

Lenin expressed similar views several times prior to 1915. The War was needed to make him abandon this conception originally shared by all Russian Marxists. Barely a year after its outbreak, he was already considering social revolution as inevitable and near at hand,—it is true, not in Russia, but in Western Europe.

1 Lenin, "Two Tactics of the Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," *Collected Works*, vol. viii, pp. 40–41.

1915: the Imperialist War as a Prelude to World Revolution

In 1915 Lenin wrote his tract entitled *Imperialism the Last Stage of Capitalism.* The War, he declared, marks "the prologue to the World Socialist Revolution." Prepared by the objective evolution of capitalism, and especially by its latest imperialist stage, Socialism, said Lenin, would be the inevitable outcome of the War. "The bud is swollen: to-morrow the flower will blossom forth."[1]

In September 1917 Lenin returns to the same idea: "The Imperialist War marks the prologue of the Socialist Revolution; not only because the horrors of the War provoke a proletarian revolt (no revolt is capable of creating Socialism unless the latter is economically ripe), but also because monopolist State capitalism constitutes the most complete material preparation for Socialism. It is therefore its precursor, the historical phase which immediately precedes the next phase, which will be Socialism. Socialism is at present looking at us from all the windows of contemporary Capitalism."[2]

1 "World Capitalism"—says Lenin in the same tract—"has reached at present (since about the beginning of the XXth century) the stage of Imperialism. Imperialism, or the period of financial capitalism, represents that highly developed stage of capitalist economy when capitalist associations pursuing monopolist aims—such as syndicates, combines, and trusts—acquire a decisive importance. The banking capital, powerfully concentrated, is merged with industrial capital. The exportation of capital abroad is developed to a very high degree. The world is now divided into territorial zones among the richest countries, and their economic partition between the international trusts has already begun. It is impossible under these conditions to avoid Imperialist wars, that is to say, wars waged for the purpose of obtaining hegemony in the world, of securing markets for financial capital, and of subjugating small and weak nations. Such is precisely the character of the first great Imperialist War of 1914. The high degree of development of World Capitalism, the substitution of monopolist Capitalism for free competition, the setting up by the banks and capitalist combines of a machinery for the regulation of the production and distribution of the products, the rise in prices as a result of the pressure of the capitalist monopolies, the oppression of the working class by the trusts, and the obstacles of all kinds placed in the way of their economic and political struggle; the horrors, misery, ruin, and savagery engendered by the Imperialist War—all this results in capitalism in its present stage giving way to Socialist proletarian revolution. The era of the latter is now inaugurated."

2 This firm conviction that Socialism was imminent, and that it must result inevitably from the War, prompted Lenin to adopt new tactics. It was no longer for him a question of "the absurd slogan of disarmament, but of using arms in order to overthrow capitalist Governments and to transform the Imperialist War into civil war with a view to establishing immediately the Socialist régime."

April 1917: Lenin's Doubts about the Character of the Russian Revolution

All these considerations applied, however, to the Western nations only. As regards Russia, Lenin could not yet surrender his old views, and still contended that the essential conditions for a Socialist revolution were so far lacking in that country. Nevertheless, as early as April 24, 1917, during the Bolshevik conference which took place shortly after Lenin's arrival in St. Petersburg, two contradictory opinions could be detected in Lenin's mind.

One was derived from classical Marxism and implied a warning: "The greater part of the Russian population"—said Lenin at the above-mentioned conference—"consists of peasants, of small farmers, unable even to think of Socialism. We cannot be certain that the peasants will travel beyond the bourgeois demands. We want them to go beyond the bourgeois stage and to seize the landed estates. But it is impossible to forecast what will be the peasants' attitude in the future. The proletarian party must not at this juncture rest its hopes on a community of interest with the peasants. The latter almost deliberately side with the capitalists."

To this realistic point of view Lenin's socialistic longings opposed a different trend of thought. In the same speech he said: "We have created forms which do not in the least resemble those of bourgeois States. The Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies constitute a political form without precedent. Being the first step towards Socialism, they are inevitable at the dawn of a Socialist society. These institutions do not and cannot exist in any bourgeois State; they alone can bring about a Socialist Revolution."

Nevertheless, the critical sense of an old Marxist still made Lenin revert to the following cautious conclusions: "The Soviets must not seize power in order to create an ordinary republic, nor should they attempt to establish Socialism at once. This is impossible. For what purpose then should they assume power? In order to take the first effective steps—which are possible and necessary—towards the establishment of Socialism. The worst would be to let fear stop us."[1]

1 Lenin's *Collected Works*, 1921, vol. xiv, p. 422.

In the Summer of 1917 Lenin Comes to Believe in the Socialist Character of the Russian Revolution

Yet in the turmoil of the Revolution Lenin soon completely discarded all his former views. The Revolution blazed forth, and he was carried away by the mass movement. He became confident that in Russia, just as in the West, Socialism was beginning to assert itself.

"In Russia, just as in the West"—he wrote—"Capitalism has already reached the stage of monopolies. This fact is proved in a striking fashion by the colliery syndicate (*Produgol*), by the syndicate of metallurgical works (*Prodamet*), by the sugar syndicate, etc. The sugar syndicate illustrates clearly the transformation of private monopoly into a capitalist State monopoly."[1]

When he spoke of monopolist capitalism, put into practice, Lenin was dazzled by the experiments which the belligerent countries, and above all Germany, had conducted during the War, in controlling and regulating production and consumption, introducing compulsory labour, etc. In the state of semi-religious fervour with which he awaited the advent of Socialism, Lenin mistook these war-time economic devices for the initial stage of a Socialist economic system within bourgeois Society. The conditions of life in a besieged fortress, whose defenders are obliged to share equally the flesh of starving horses, appeared to Lenin as evidence that Socialism was "looking out of all the windows of Capitalism."[2]

Having come to this conclusion, and not being longer bound by his earlier opinion that Russia was neither objectively nor subjectively ripe for Socialism, Lenin could now "go at full speed towards Socialism." At his first meeting with his political followers in Russia, on April 17, 1917, Lenin declared that the Bolsheviks had to "change their underwear, that is, give up the name of *Social-Democrats* and in the place of the rotten *Social-Democracy* create a new Socialist organization: the Communist one." Even the official Bolshevik organ, *Pravda*, refused at first to support Lenin. In a leading article, dated April 21, 1917, it said that Lenin's suggestion "appears unacceptable since it proceeds from the assump-

1 Lenin's tract, *The Disaster Which Threatens Us and How to Avert It* (1917).

2 "If you tried"—said Lenin—"to substitute for a State of capitalist 'Junkers' a revolutionary State unafraid to introduce the most complete democracy"—that is moving towards State monopolies—"you would see that State Capitalism was necessarily a step towards Socialism." (Lenin's tract, *The Disaster, etc.*, 1917.)

tion that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is already over, and it contemplates the immediate transformation of that revolution into a Socialist revolution." Lenin remained totally unmoved by the objections which arose from his own Party. The old contention of Plekhanov and other Marxists that Socialism was not yet ripe in Russia, he had come to regard as mere reactionary talk.[1]

"Socialism"—wrote Lenin in September of the same year—"is nothing else but the stage which follows immediately that of State capitalist monopoly. It is none other than the State capitalist monopoly placed at the service of the whole people and thereby ceasing to be a capitalist monopoly. There is no middle term between the two systems. Monopolies must lead to Socialism. The War has increased their number, their role, and their importance. One must either be a sincere revolutionary democrat and not fear this step towards Socialism, or, on the contrary, be afraid of it and share the views of Peshekhonov, Chernov, and Dan,[2] who maintain that our Revolution is a bourgeois one, and that there is no place in it for Socialism. If one adopts their ideas, one will inevitably slide down towards the policy of Kerensky, Miliukov and Kornilov, that is, one will arrive at the repression of the democratic and revolutionary tendencies of the workers and peasant masses by bureaucratic and reactionary methods. The dialectic of history is such that the War has enormously accelerated the transformation of capitalist monopolies into State monopolies, and thereby brought the advent of Socialism considerably nearer. For a number of historical reasons—Russia's backward condition, the special difficulties created for her by the War, the utter disruption of the Tsarist system, and

1 In the above-cited tract, *The Disaster, etc.*, written towards the end of 1917, Lenin said: "This objection, current in the bourgeois, *Socialist-Revolutionary*, and Menshevik Press, is really a reactionary defence of the positions of capitalism, now a backward system. It is suggested that we are not ready for Socialism, that its establishment would be premature, that our Revolution is bourgeois, and that therefore all that is left to us is to be the servants of the bourgeoisie. In arguing thus, these wretched Marxists, assisted by the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*, fail to understand, in their obsequiousness towards the bourgeoisie, what an Imperialist monopoly means. If a large capitalist enterprise succeeds in creating a State-wide monopoly, one of two things happens: either the State guides it in the interests of the owners and capitalists, and we are thus in the presence of a reactionary, bureaucratic system, of an Imperialist Republic; or else the State operates it in the interests of the revolutionary democracy, and then it is a step towards Socialism."

2 Peshekhonov was at the time leader of the Populist Socialists, Dan of the *Mensheviks*, and Chernov of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*.

the powerful survival of the revolutionary traditions of 1905—the Revolution broke out in Russia earlier than in other countries. It has enabled Russia to overtake in a few months the political achievements of the most advanced countries. Yet this is not enough. Lest we fail we must overtake and even eclipse other countries also in the economic field. We must either perish or advance at full speed."[1]

Lenin's "Socialist" Reforms

By placing full political power in his hands the November *coup d'état* enabled Lenin to put his new decisions into execution. Between November 1917 and 1920 he applied all the measures he thought essential for the establishment of Socialism in Russia. After the nationalization of the banks came the nationalization of industry, of houses, general compulsory labour, a strict enforcement of the grain monopoly and of several others, the suppression of private trade, the distribution of all commodities by ration cards, and a State system of "accounting" and "control" in all departments of life. These measures were to a large extent inspired by Germany's economic experiments during the War. "Our duty"—said Lenin—"is to learn the lessons of State Capitalism from the Germans and to digest them even by means of dictatorial measures."

Socialist Illusions in 1918–1919

These dictatorial methods enabled Lenin to introduce into Russia all that is implied by Socialist doctrine. In the heat of their struggle, as happens in all revolutions, the men who made the Revolution lost all sense of proportion. They were convinced that, notwithstanding famine and ruin, Socialism had actually come down from heaven to be established on earth. Socialism was no longer an ideal of the future. It had already come; it was the present. This state of mind was reflected in the Russian words of the *Internationale* which were modified, at the end of 1918, to suit this sense.[2]

1 Lenin, *The Disaster, etc.*, *Collected Works*, vol. xiv, pp. 207–213.

2 Everyone knows to-day the refrain of this revolutionary song: "It is the final battle." The rules of Russian versification had substituted a somewhat different version, viz., "It *will be* the final battle." This future tense in the National Anthem of the U.S.S.R. sounded like a perpetual denial of the Socialist realities acclaimed by the Bolsheviks. The text was therefore altered and the verb put into the present tense by order.

Lenin was at this time entirely under the sway of his illusions. "Our Revolution"—he wrote to the workers of St. Petersburg—"has succeeded in coming to immediate grips with the concrete and practical realization of Socialism."[1] "We are fighting at present for the principle of communist distribution," he announced on June 4, 1918, in connection with the decree regulating food supplies.

Speaking of the Peasant Pauper Committees which had been formed in the villages to suppress the *kulaks*,[2] a last remnant of the bourgeois régime, Lenin said, at the VIth extraordinary congress of the Soviets that this measure would definitely establish Socialism in the villages: "We have made a gigantic stride forward, one of a universal, historic importance; a step which the most democratic republican States have not yet dared to take. The poor peasants, closely following the urban workers, now at last form a solid and definite basis for the real construction of Socialism. It is a tremendous change which, within such a short space of time, has led us to Socialism in the villages."[3]

End of Lenin's Socialist Illusions

Here then was Socialism rooted in the towns and the villages. Could this illusion last? Certainly not. By the end of 1920 foreign troops no longer occupied any part of the Soviet territory. On November 14th of that year, the White Army of General Wrangel evacuated the Crimea and was shipped abroad. The Bolsheviks were now able to shake off warlike exaltation, and to come down from the realm of dreams into that of stern realities. What was the picture before Lenin's eyes? He saw that his dissertations about capitalist monopolies evolving directly into Socialism were ill-founded. He realized that there was no Socialism in Russia, but merely "War Communism," the Communism of a besieged and blockaded country, starved and reduced to misery after the bitter ordeal of external war followed by a cruel civil war. During the Great War all Western countries had practised that kind of Com-

1 *Pravda*, May 24, 1918.

2 Prior to the Revolution the word *kulak* was used to denote rich peasants who profited by inadequate development of credit facilities in the villages to lend money to their fellow-villagers at usurious rates of interest. The debtors usually settled their debts in kind or in labour. The name of *kulaks*, formerly reserved for peasant usurers, was extended by the Bolsheviks to all the peasants employing paid labour, and then, in general, to all the well-to-do peasants.

3 *Pravda*, December 18, 1918.

munism and had repealed it with relief the moment the War was over. And yet it was precisely this state of things caused by the War that, according to Lenin, was to give birth to Socialism. Lenin was too intelligent not to admit the mistake he had made through his ardent faith in the immediate advent of Socialism. He had the courage to declare: "This peculiar 'War Communism' consisted in taking from the peasants the surplus of their produce, and sometimes even a part of what was necessary for their subsistence. We have made requisitions to keep up the Army and maintain the workers. These requisitions were generally made on credit and paid in paper money. Had we acted otherwise, we could not have mastered the landowners and capitalists. 'War Communism' was necessitated by the war and by the ruin of the country. It has not been and could not be a policy answering to the economic needs of the proletariat. It was but a temporary measure."[1] Thus crumbled away the barely completed structure of "War Communism," whose façade, as it now appeared, was only crudely painted in the gay colours of Socialism.

Outcome of "War Communism"

What was left of the immense upheaval carried out under the slogan: "At full speed towards Socialism"? First of all, a nationalized industry, utterly ruined and moribund. Secondly, an agrarian overturn resulting from the seizure of the estates of the nobles and other large landowners by the peasants. In 1918 Lenin believed that he had established Socialism in the villages. In 1921 he preferred to acknowledge that, far from establishing Socialism, the agrarian revolution had merely created small private holdings and that the "egalitarian partition" of land had largely profited the medium peasant (*Seredniak*). "It is the medium peasants who now predominate in the villages: there are fewer rich peasants (*kulaks*) and fewer poor ones."[2]

Lenin Loses Faith in the Socialist Character of the Revolution

Having lost many of his illusions, Lenin now severely criticized those who still cherished them. He ridiculed the "old-fashioned

1 Lenin, *On the Food Tax*, April 1921.
2 Lenin's speech of April 9, 1921.

posters" displaying obsolete slogans with which Moscow was still "adorned," three and a half years after the November Revolution. He had nothing save ironic remarks for the new triumphant version of the *Internationale*, which had seemed to him so appropriate when "Socialism was looking out of all the windows." He fully realized that the country was still far "from entering straight into Socialism." In 1921 the old watchwords, which he himself had coined during the first years of the Revolution, almost irritated him.[1]

"Cast a glance at the map of Soviet Russia"—Lenin wrote at that time.—"North of Vologda, south-east of Rostov-on-Don and Saratov, south of Orenburg and Omsk, and north of Tomsk, you will see endless expanses which could contain dozens of large civilized States. These territories still remain in patriarchal, half-wild, if not absolutely savage, conditions. And what is to be said of the peasants lost in the remotest corners of Russia? Everywhere, for hundreds of versts,[2] primitive tracks separate, or rather isolate, the villages from railway stations—that is from contact with civilization, with capitalism, with large industries, with the big cities. Do not patriarchal old-worldliness, sleepy laziness, and semi-savagery reign in these desolate expanses? Is it to be imagined that under such conditions Russia can pass immediately to Socialism?"[3]

1 In his tract *On the Food Tax* Lenin wrote: "We avoid talking about certain important matters, we do not think about them, we overlook them. Not because we are strong and clever, but because we are weak and stupid. We are afraid of facing the 'bare truth,' and much too often prefer the 'lofty delusion.' We repeat all the time that we are passing from Capitalism to Socialism, and forget who 'we' are. 'We' are the vanguard of the proletariat, advancing towards Socialism, but the vanguard is only a small portion of the population. In order to solve successfully the problem of our direct transition to Socialism we must understand the conditions, methods, and means that are necessary for arriving at Socialism. Therein resides the whole problem."

2 Measure of distance equal to 0·662 mile.

3 Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. xxvi, p. 338. "I know"—said Lenin at the Xth Congress of the party in 1921—"that all this will make people say: 'What a Communism is this! It is like an invalid walking on crutches, with his face all bandaged up. Only a distorted picture is left of Communism. . . .' Russia has come out of the War in the condition of a half-dead man beaten nearly to death; she was being beaten for seven years, and is lucky to be still able to walk on crutches. To imagine that we van dispense with crutches is completely to misunderstand the situation. After seven years of war, the workers and peasant masses of our backward country are in a state of exhaustion rendering them almost incapable of labour. We must have an economic respite. So long as the Revolution does not break out in other countries, we must, without regret, yield to foreigners hundreds of millions and even thousands of millions drawn from our immense wealth, from our unlimited reserves of raw materials, in order to secure the help of great modern capitalism. We shall reap a hundredfold what we spend. To

Lenin's Retreat before Capitalism

In November 1918, at a conference of the leaders of the Party held in Moscow, Lenin had said: "We shall never give up our principles. . . A Bolshevik proposing any kind of agreement to the bourgeoisie would be ridiculous and pitiable." Yet in April 1921 he openly appealed to international capitalism offering it agreements and concessions. Lenin's voice has been recorded three times for the gramophone, and one of the recorded speeches begins literally thus: "The Soviet Government appeals to foreign capitalists desirous of securing concessions in Russia."

At this time Lenin dreamt of a veritable alliance, a "*bloc*" with foreign capital. He wanted to establish an economic structure which, at its apex, "would resemble an alliance with foreign capital" and at its base "would allow the proletarian State to barter freely with the peasants."[1]

The New Economic Policy, or N.E.P.

Thus this fierce assailant of all Socialist compromise with the bourgeoisie ended by becoming a fervent champion of co-operation between the Soviet régime and modern Capitalism. At the same time as he appealed to the big foreign capitalists—who incidentally did not respond to his appeal—Lenin freed small Russian Capitalism. He abolished all the monopolies, reopened markets and fairs, granted full freedom to trade in general and to peasant trade in particular. In the last years of his life this champion of monopolies and State control over all forms of life, became the advocate of free exchange and private enterprise.[2]

With ruthless realism he criticized the policy of previous years and all revolutionary delusions. "We went too far"—he said—"on the path of nationalization of commerce and industry, and in the

maintain the proletarian power in a country radically ruined and mostly populated by destitute peasants, we must resort to the assistance of capitalism, although the latter will no doubt demand from us exorbitant interest. We must either choose this economic prospect or cease to exist." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. xxvi, p. 245.)

1 Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. xxiii, p. 324.

2 "Every effort must be made to revive exchanges between industry and agriculture. Those who succeed best in it, be it with the aid of private capital, will render greater services to the building up of Russian Socialism than those who 'think' of nothing but of the purity of Communism, or draw up regulations and statutes without actually furthering an economic exchange." (Lenin's speech at the Xth Congress of the Communist Party in 1921.)

suppression of local trade. Was it a blunder? Yes, without question. In this respect we have committed obvious blunders and it would be criminal not to see and realize that we have overstepped the limit. We continue to repeat that 'Capitalism is the evil and Socialism the good.' Yes, Capitalism is an evil in comparison with Socialism; but it is beneficial when compared with medieval conditions. Capitalism will remain inevitable so long as we are unable to effect a direct transition from small industry to Socialism. An attempt completely to suppress private trade—which amounts to Capitalism—would be an absurdity and would lead to the suicide of the party seeking to do so. It would be an absurdity because such a policy is economically unfeasible; and it would be suicide because a party which attempted it would be doomed to failure. It is not the growth of the petty bourgeoisie and the small capitalist that has to be feared; what we have to fear is the prolongation of famine, of misery, of food shortage. We must, in the first place, reckon with the medium peasants. Since the latter predominate in the villages, we must help them to improve their farming."[1]

"It is essential to wake up the activity of the small farmer, to give him an incentive, to stimulate his work. Of course, freedom of trade means the growth of Capitalism. One cannot escape from that. Whoever does not acknowledge this fact would merely be deluding himself by words. Freedom of exchange means freedom of trade, and freedom of trade means going back to Capitalism. Is it possible to restore, to a certain extent, freedom of trade or freedom of Capitalism for the benefit of small farmers, without striking at the roots of the political power of the proletariat? It is possible, because it is merely a question of degree."[2]

It is clear that in 1921 Lenin found himself in the position which Plekhanov had forecast as early as 1883, when he spoke of the stupendous difficulties lying in store for any Socialist party which assumed control, in the absence of the prerequisite economic conditions for the realization of its programme. The father of Russian *Social-Democracy* maintained that should such a situation arise it would be necessary, in order to avert catastrophe, to revert to that economic inequality, which it would be the primary object of the Socialist Government to remove. This is what happened to

1 Lenin's *Collected Works*, 2nd edition, 1935, vol. xxvi, p. 333.

2 See Lenin's speeches at the Xth Congress of the Communist Party and his tract, *On the Food Tax*.

Lenin. He was obliged to beat a retreat and adopt the course of releasing capitalist energies. He was forced to admit in 1921 that economically, and especially from the standpoint of production, the country "has not yet reached even the threshold of Socialism."[1]

Lenin was not, however, to preside much longer over his New Economic Policy (or *N.E.P.*). Taken ill in 1921, he had in the following years to relinquish all direction of State sffairs. Stricken with paralysis, he died on January 21, 1924.

Lenin's Ideological Legacy

What political legacy, what programme did Lenin bequeath to his successors?

Accumulated in the course of twenty-five years' political activity, and subject during this time to many changes of outlook, Lenin's legacy is susceptible of the most varied, and often most contradictory interpretations. If one takes his latest ideas in the period ranging from the end of 1920 to 1922, when he had already outgrown his illusions, they will be found to consist in a species of Right-Wing Communism or something still more moderate. If, under Stalin's dictatorship, anyone had dared to repeat what Lenin said in 1921, he would have been immediately accused of counter-revolution, sent to a concentration camp, or shot as a traitor and a tool of the White Army. . . If, on the other hand, one takes Lenin's ideas of 1917–1918, when he exhorted his revolutionary followers "to march ahead or to perish," it will be seen that at that time he was treading the path which led directly to Stalin and his Five-Year Plan.

There is no need to be an opponent of Bolshevism in order to see that Lenin's contradictory utterances cannot be graphically represented by a regular curve, but rather by sharp zigzags due now to forced concessions to reality, and then to the passionate desire to deny that very reality.

Opposition to the N.E.P. Its End

The inconsistencies of Bolshevik policy are not confined to Lenin's name alone: they still continue. Soon after Lenin's death an opposition to the New Economic Policy sprang into being. It was at first headed by Trotsky, then by Kamenev, Zinoviev and others. They denounced the tyranny of the new capitalism, of the "nepmen" who, having enriched themselves through the restoration of private

1 Lenin's address at the Xth Congress of the Communist Party.

trade, competed with State syndicates. They stigmatized the dangerous activities of the *kulaks*, who were said to be gaining ground. They already apprehended the day when the vast peasant tide would sweep away the little islets of nationalized economy. To avert that danger, they said, it was necessary to crush the *kulaks* and undertake the collectivization of medium peasants. The remedy was to build up new factories as soon as possible in order to increase artificially, and hastily, the numbers of the proletariat, the mainstay of the Government's power. Where was one to find, however, the requisite capital to meet the enormous expenses which such schemes would entail? One of the Oppositionists, named Preobrazhensky, was the first to disavow Lenin's policy in sparing the peasants. He suggested a new method for raising the funds needed for industrialization, namely by "a feudal exploitation of the peasantry." This proposal aroused vehement protests on the part of Rykov, Bukharin, and Stalin. But five years later it was Stalin himself who made Preobrazhensky's plan the basis of his policy.

After Lenin's death the New Economic Policy lingered for a few years, but at the end of 1923 the Government began to assail what Lenin's successors described as "the deformation of the *N.E.P.*" Wholesale private trade which had revived under the *N.E.P.*, was prohibited. The State established very low fixed prices for its purchases of grain from the peasants. In 1928 military detachments were sent to the villages forcibly to requisition grain. The *N.E.P.* disappeared before bearing its full fruit. Yet, at the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, held in July 1928, Rykov, the strongest supporter of Lenin's "new policy," declared that all rumours concerning the abrogation of the *N.E.P.* were only "counter-revolutionary chatter."

Stalin Against Immediate Socialization

On July 14, 1928, Stalin delivered at Leningrad an address on the political and economic position of the country. He was not yet dictator, but he had already overthrown Trotsky, his most dangerous rival, with the help of Rykov, Bukharin, Voroshilov, Molotov, and others. "There are people who imagine"—said Stalin—"that economic individualism has given all it is capable of and is therefore not worth preserving. This is a mistake. These people have nothing to do with the policy pursued by our Party. The real way out of the difficulty lies in encouraging small and medium farmers by

helping them by all possible means to improve their crops and increase their output."[1] This statement proves that in the middle of 1928 Stalin still supported Lenin's latest policy.

Stalin in Favour of the Immediate Building up of Socialism

Seven months after this speech, however, Stalin came forth as a champion of the immediate building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. In order to build up Socialism, inconceivable in the Marxist sense without mechanized production, Stalin decided to resort to five-year plans, designed to force the pace of the country's economic development. He also announced that private individual farming was antiquated and recommended the compulsory collectivization of the rural areas, basing his policy on Lenin's slogans of 1917: "To perish or to march ahead at full speed. To overtake and eclipse economically the most advanced countries."

It was this state of mind which determined the frenzied rhythms of the Five-Year Plans. In February 1931, imitating Lenin even in phraseology, Stalin stated at the All-Russia Conference of industrial officials: "Do you want our Socialist fatherland to be defeated and to forfeit its independence? If not, you must do away with its backwardness as speedily as possible, and develop its economics at a real Bolshevik pace. There is no other way. That is why Lenin said during the November Revolution: 'We must either perish or overtake and eclipse the capitalist countries.' We are 50 to 100 years behind the progressive countries. We must do this, otherwise we shall be crushed."[2]

On May 4, 1935, when receiving the cadets of the Red Military Academy in the Kremlin, Stalin once more stressed the fundamental principle of the Five-Year Plans: "Our aim was to remove the country from the path of medievalism and ignorance to that of modern industry and mechanized agriculture. The case stood as follows: either we must solve the problems within a short time, and thereby consolidate Socialism in our country, or we shall be unable to solve it at all, and if so Russia, technically weak and culturally backward, will forfeit its independence and become a plaything of the Imperialist Powers."[3]

1 *Izvestia*, July 16, 1928.
2 *Pravda*, February 5, 1931.
3 Ibid., May 6, 1935.

Stalin's Further Zigzags

In reality the Second Five-Year Plan, then in operation, was clearly a step backward when compared with the First. Once more the claims of life had prevailed and Stalin, just as Lenin before him, was driven to retreat. There is little doubt that the policy which Stalin is at present pursuing in Russia may become as detrimental to the establishment of Socialism as Lenin's *N.E.P.*[1]

Thus, the general line of Stalin's policy exhibited still more sudden turns and twists than Lenin's. In Stalin's case, much more so than in that of his predecessor, the change of programme is determined by an ill-disguised resort to manœuvring at the cost of surrendering principles until recently held sacred, rather than by the evolution of personal ideas.[2]

The Main Lines of the Organization of the Communist Party. Dictatorship within the Party

The rigidity of the fundamental principles combined with the extreme instability of the programme form one of the most striking features of the Russian Communist Party. In the principles of its organization it differs from the usual type of political parties as they were known prior to the Great War.

From its very foundation Lenin conceived his Party as a conspiratorial organization blindly obeying orders from the centre and welded together by an iron discipline of a military type. When explaining his requirements to the *Social-Democratic* congress of 1903, Lenin clenched his fist symbolically. This symbolical "fist" he intended to embody, and he actually did so. Even at the time of that congress some of its members foresaw to what practical results Lenin's views on party organization would lead. Trotsky, who was then twenty-four years old and represented the *Social-Democrats* of Siberia, wrote that Lenin had shown an obvious

1 For the details of Stalin's new policy, see the chapters *The March towards Socialism* and *The Results of the Bolshevik Experiment.*

2 The fundamental distinction between Lenin and Stalin in their political vacillations may be reduced, after all, to the difference in their personal calibre. The substance remains the same. In either case it would be futile to look for a single "general line." Both have been tossed between a complete realization of Socialism and a curtailed form of Capitalism. Yet despite all those vacillations Lenin remains undoubtedly a clever theorist and a subtle tactician; while Stalin is a matter of fact and often primitive "realist." He is incapable of following the intricacies of any doctrine, and mostly fails to give the zigzags of his policy a sound theoretical justification. Primarily he is a shrewd and unscrupulous manœuvrer.

"eagerness for power." "The 'state of siege' which Lenin insisted on establishing in the Party demanded a strong authority. The existence of organized mistrust within the Party must be dealt with by an iron hand: the reign of terror called for a Robespierre. Comrade Lenin after having reviewed in his mind the members of the Party, concluded that he and he alone was that iron hand."[1]

The discordant views of Bolsheviks and *Mensheviks* regarding the organization of the Party were very pronounced. The *Mensheviks* desired a party democratic in structure, and modelled on that of Western European *Social-Democratic* parties as they then were. The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, had shown from the beginning a desire for a leader who would rule them, and they were ready to obey a firm authority, to act rather than to discuss, and this always in compliance with directions emanating from a "masterful centre." Lenin's policy within the Party essentially tended towards shaping all the Bolshevik organizations into simple instruments of execution at the orders of a central authority.[2] Not until Stalin, however, were all the logical conclusions drawn from this autocratic conception of the Party. It became a completely militarized organization. Its members were compelled to carry out without demur the orders of the Central Committee dominated by the Party dictator, Stalin. The mere risk of appearing unorthodox exposed them to reprisals, such as deportation, imprisonment, or even execution.

Dictatorship in the Komintern

Lenin applied to the Third or Communist International the same principles that governed his party organization, with of course the same result. In Lenin's opinion, throughout the War, Socialists in all countries had become "Jingo Socialists." Contaminated by capitalism, they were ready for any compromise with the bourgeoisie. What was needed was the speediest possible revival of the real Socialist movement, the foundation of Communist

1 Trotsky, *The IInd Congress of the Russian Workers' Social-Democratic Party.* Geneva, 1903, p. 20.

2 The *Mensheviks* as a rule showed great uneasiness in the face of the "dictatorial" tendencies which appeared from the birth of the *Social-Democratic* Party. Yet they did not attach sufficient importance to Lenin's tract published in 1902 under the title *What Is to Be Done?* In this Lenin propounded his views concerning party organization. It was many months before the Congress of 1903, which ended in the split between the Bolsheviks and the *Mensheviks*. Subsequently, the Bolsheviks were entitled to say to the *Mensheviks* that if they had not understood the obvious tendency of that tract, it was their own fault.

Parties throughout the world, and their affiliation to the Communist International or *Komintern.*[1]

The Third International was created by Lenin in 1919. It was based on his immutable principle of a strong commanding centre and absolute submission to it of all the affiliated organizations. The sections of the Third International scattered all over the globe became branches of the central organization which had its seat in Moscow. In the end, the Communist organizations of all countries were converted into instruments of the foreign policy of the Soviets.

By virtue of the Statutes which he bestowed on the *Komintern*, Lenin imparted to the International Communist movement the same military character he had given to his own Party. According to the resolution of the IInd congress of the Communist International held in Moscow from July 19 to August 6, 1920, the Communist Party was to be based on "implacable proletarian centralism." "It cannot fulfil its duties otherwise than by submitting to a strict centralism, to an iron discipline of a semi-military nature directed by a Central Committee endowed with strong and wide powers." As a result of this principle of organization the history of the Party is bound up with that of its leader—first Lenin and then Stalin.

It is practically impossible, under these conditions, to draw a clear line between the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the supreme organs of the *Komintern.* The efforts made by the spokesmen of the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to prove that the Executive Committee of the *Komintern* acts independently of Moscow are anything but convincing. The identity of views of the *Komintern* and of the Soviet Government follows clearly from the writings of both Lenin and Stalin.

Relationship with Bourgeois Environment

Stalin has indeed recently confirmed his faithfulness to the doctrine that a "Socialist" State is in the long run incompatible with bourgeois environment, as is clearly emphasized in the letter which *Pravda* published in its number of February 14, 1938, and which was addressed by him to a young party propagandist, Ivanov. Stalin recalls that "the final victory of Socialism, the complete

1 The decision to create the Third International was adopted on Lenin's suggestion by the VIIth Congress of the Bolshevik Party held in St. Petersburg from May 7 to 12, 1917.

assurance that bourgeois relationship cannot be restored, is only possible if that victory is carried out on an international scale.[1] He further quotes Lenin's words: "We live not only in a State but in a system of States, and the prolonged existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with the Imperialistic States is unthinkable. Finally either the one or the other will be victorious. And until this happens, a series of terrible conflicts between the Soviet Republic and the Bourgeois States is unavoidable."[2] In face of the danger of such a conflict, it is not sufficient for the Soviets to maintain a powerful army, and spend for this purpose sums which could be used for more productive ends. "All our people must be kept in a state of mobilization, so that we may never be taken unawares." In order to ensure better chances of success in such unavoidable conflicts, Stalin further urges the strengthening of the ties between the working classes in the U.S.S.R. and those of the bourgeois countries and the necessity for the Soviet Government to assist any proletariat movement in other countries.

Stalin, Sole Leader of the Komintern

It is, indeed, perfectly certain that the real masters of power in the U.S.S.R. and in the *Komintern* are the same men. Officially, Stalin is only one of the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and not even a member of its "Praesidium," but in reality he is its all-powerful chief. It is not in vain that Stalin, "Leader of the people of the U.S.S.R.," is also designated by foreign Communists as "Leader of the World proletariat."

The declarations of Stalin on the occasion of M. Laval's visit to Moscow in 1934 had a decisive influence on the tactics of the French Communist Party. The official communiqué signed by Laval and Stalin, in fact, ended the opposition of the French Communists to the strengthening of the French military forces which Laval's Government deemed necessary. Should Stalin show displeasure with any member of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. this fact immediately reacts on the latter's position in the *Komintern*. This happened, for instance, in the case of Zinoviev who was, for a number of years, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, a post to which he had been appointed

1 Resolution of the XIVth Congress of Soviets, 1925.
2 Lenin's *Complete Works*, vol. xxiv, p. 122.

by Lenin. He was, however, removed from his presidential office as soon as he began in 1926 to display signs of independence and use the *Komintern* for fostering opposition to Stalin among the Communists of different countries.[1] In 1929 the same fate overtook another prominent Bolshevik, Bukharin, member of the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the *Komintern*, who was found guilty of being the leader of the Right-Wing Opposition in the Party and of supporting at the same time the right-wing tendency in the *Komintern*.[2] The penalty for such temerity was not long withheld. On the initiative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Bukharin was relieved of his functions as an executive member of the *Komintern* (July 3, 1929). The reasons invoked by the Committee are very characteristic: "The mistakes committed by Bukharin in the policy of the All-Russia Communist Party are closely related to his errors in international affairs. Confirming the decision of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Party to dismiss Bukharin from his post in the *Komintern*, the Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International resolves to relieve him of his functions as a member of the Praesidium of the said Committee."

After the fall of Bukharin, Stalin himself assumed the direction of the affairs of the *Komintern*. At the VIIth Congress of the *Komintern*, in 1935, he proposed to choose the Bulgarian Communist Dimitrov as "pilot of the Communist International." His proposal was immediately adopted, a post of "Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the Communist International" being specially created for Dimitrov.

1 The resolution of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the Communist Party relative to Zinoviev's dismissal was passed on October 23, 1926. This resolution ran: "Considering that Comrade Zinoviev is not following the line of the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International . . . the Central Committee of the Party and the Central Control Commission deem it impossible for him to continue his activities in the Communist International." In order, however, to avoid an official dismissal, Zinoviev hastened to send in his resignation (*Pravda*, November 24, 1926). After that incident, the post of Chairman of the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was suppressed.

2 The decision of the Communist Party to remove Bukharin from his post as member of the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Komintern was taken on April 23, 1929, at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Party.

Foreign Communist Parties are Branches of Moscow

Such are the characteristics of the inner organization of the Communist International which transform foreign Communist Parties into mere branches of the Moscow headquarters. Whenever the leaders of those parties, citing this or that article concerning the statutes of the *Komintern*, permit themselves to steer an independent course, experience proves that a wide difference exists between the statutes and their observance. The culprits are summoned to Moscow; they return full of "repentance," or do not return at all, and are replaced by men ready to comply blindly with Stalin's wishes. This is known to have happened to the Communist Parties of France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, etc.[1]

Dictatorship in the Party and in the Country

Since Fate allowed the Communist Party to assume power in Russia, it naturally followed that the leader of that Party, its omnipotent dictator, also became the dictator of Russia. The reproach which Trotsky flung at Lenin in 1903, when accusing him of striving at "a state of siege aggravated by dictatorship," was not a mere polemical display, but indicated a real insight into the future not only of the Communist Party but also of a great nation. And it was with Trotsky's assistance that Lenin established in Russia the most terrible dictatorship the world has ever known.

For Lenin, dictatorship was the logical outcome of his theory that compulsion exercised by the State was the only means of establishing Socialism and creating a classless society.

1 Some very interesting information on this subject has been supplied by Anton Ciliga, former member of the Political Bureau of the Yugoslav Communist Party, in the December 1935 issue of *Vérité*, organ of the French Trotskyists. Ciliga and two other Yugoslav Communists were arrested in 1930 by the G.P.U. of Moscow and charged with Trotskyist sympathies. Ciliga spent five years in Soviet prisons prior to being released, and was then expelled from U.S.S.R. His comrades remained in gaol. According to Ciliga, in the U.S.S.R. hundreds of foreign Communists are either imprisoned or exiled. Many of them were arrested for matters which had nothing to do with Soviet home politics. Thus, three members of the *Politbureau* of the Hungarian Communist Party were summoned to Moscow in order to justify their differences with Bela Kuhn. As a result of the investigation of their relations with him, they were arrested and banished to the Verkhneuralsk "political isolation camp." The prisons in the U.S.S.R. are entirely under the control of the Soviet Government. Yet besides the many "internal enemies" incarcerated in them, there are also some who are detained for crimes against the *Komintern*.

Of course, Lenin was sufficiently imbued with Marxism not to think that the use of violence and terror by the State would for ever remain inseparable from the social order aspired to by the Communists. In accordance with Marx's and Engels's manifesto he believed that the time would come when the State as an instrument of coercion would take its place in the archives of history, in company with stone axes, and give way to a free Communist society. This epoch, in his opinion a very remote one, cannot come until human nature has been completely transformed and the new "collective citizen" substituted for the man of to-day.[1]

Lenin's Original Democratism

Just before the Bolsheviks seized power, and while Lenin was trying to fight the Provisional Government with its own weapons, he proclaimed—it is true, with demagogic intentions—that the government of the country should be based on the respect of all democratic liberties and on their extension to the utmost.

Champions of democracy will find in Lenin's works the most comprehensive statement of democratic principles. For this purpose it suffices to consult Lenin's writings of 1917 dealing with the revision of the Party programme. At this time Lenin held the view that the democratic measures provided for in the 1903 programme were not far reaching enough. Drawing inspiration from the French

1 In his book *The State and Revolution,* written in August and September 1917, Lenin gives a theoretical justification for the assumption of power by the "vanguard of the proletariat" (i.e. the Bolsheviks), which he was urging at the time. "In order to lead society to Socialism, this vanguard"—said Lenin—"needs the State as a centralized organ of force and constraint, just as much with a view to crushing the resistance of the exploiters as to controlling the popular masses." Human nature, such as it is to-day, "will have to submit to this armed vanguard . . . so long as the people are incapable of living in a society where there is neither constraint nor subordination. . . . Until then, the State is indispensable to the proletariat not in order to ensure the freedom of the people, but solely in order to ensure the destruction of its enemies." In seizing the State mechanism of coercion, the revolutionary Government of the Socialists will "begin by establishing the first stage of the Communist society" in which "the bourgeois legal system will be abolished only . . . as regards the means of production, but . . . will be preserved for the distribution of labour and products among members of the community. Whoever does not work shall not eat. However, it will not be Communism yet," for "unequal men will receive unequal quantities of products for unequal amounts of labour." Such was to be, according to Lenin's idea, the transition stage between the bourgeois State and the complete establishment of Communism. "Only in the latter event will the need for coercion disappear, and then the State will die out." (Lenin, *The State and Revolution,* pp. 117, 119, and 120.)

Commune of 1871, he declared that his Party "cannot be satisfied with a democratic republic of parliamentary and bourgeois type" and must pursue a more thorough democratic programme. The Constitution, he summarized, should embody the following principles:

(1) Sovereignty of the people. Full sovereign power to be vested in the representatives of the people constituting a single representative assembly.

(2) Universal, equal, and secret suffrage. Proportional representation. Recall of all the representatives of the people at any given moment by simple resolution of the majority of electors.

(3) Wide local self-government. No appointments of local and provincial authorities to be made by the Central Government.

(4) Inviolability of persons and domiciles.

(5) Absolute freedom of conscience, of speech, of the Press, of meetings, strikes, and associations.

(6) Judges, civil servants, and military commanders to be elected by the people, and any of these to be recalled at any moment by simple resolution of the electors.

(7) Substitution of an armed militia for the police and regular army.[1]

Rejection of the Democratic Principle. Dictatorship of the Leader

After the Bolsheviks seized power, Lenin suddenly abandoned these demagogic tactics of vaunting ultra-democracy, and discarded all such utterances. The Charter of the Rights of Man and Citizen drawn up by him was consumed in the flames of Revolution and civil war. The dictatorship of the peasant and workers class brought about the dictatorship of the Communist Party which in its turn became the dictatorship of the Central Committee and then the dictatorship of the Political Bureau of the Party, to end ultimately in that of one man.

In his views on dictatorship, as on many other points, Stalin is Lenin's continuator and, as it were, a simplified edition of him.

[1] It is unnecessary to enumerate the other clauses of the Constitution drawn up by Lenin—they can be found *in extenso* in volume xx of his *Works* (1927 Edition, pp. 303–310) and in the official declarations of the Bolshevik Party made in 1917.

The absolute power of the Soviet State, embodied in the person of the dictator, subjugates all Russian life, not only in its political and economic, but also in its intellectual aspect. The State in Soviet Russia is the sole master of education, of science, and scientific research, of the Press, of the theatre, of literature, and art. It governs and commands all activity whatsoever. Under such conditions the individual is doomed to lose his personality, to be merged in the collective mass, shapened and moulded by the State. In reality it comes to this: work as the State ordains; think what the State commands; speak as the State prescribes.[1]

Stalin's "Democratic" Constitution

Since the Soviet Government for many years continued to affirm that universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage, together with all personal liberties, was merely a bourgeois delusion, the decision taken by the VIIth Congress of the Soviets, on February 6, 1935, would seem to be a complete reversal of the political structure of the U.S.S.R. This decision was summarized as follows by Molotov, the President of the Council of People's Commissars: "At the suggestion of comrade Stalin the question of modifying the Soviet Constitution has been raised. The time has arrived when the Soviet State can consolidate its régime still further by adopting what is best in universal, direct, and secret suffrage."[2]

Molotov's declaration appeared to be of a highly important character. It seemed to put an end to seventeen years of scornful rejection of the principles underlying all representative democratic institutions. Less than two years after this speech, the reform he had announced was passed as law. On December 5, 1936, the VIIIth Congress of the Soviets approved the new Constitution presented by Stalin as chairman of the commission entrusted with its drafting. Taken literally, it even exceeds some of Molotov's promises. "Stalin's Constitution" introduces universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage; it promises freedom of speech, of the Press, and of meetings, the right to leisure and to education, as well as to various forms of social assistance. Finally it implies the abandonment of the Sovietic State structure, properly speaking, that is of the organization of

1 A more detailed analysis of Lenin's and Stalin's dictatorships will be found in the chapter "The Dictator and His Power." The results of the dictatorship are described in chapters that follow.

2 *Pravda*, February 7, 1935.

authority in the form of a pyramid of councils called "Soviets."[1] Nevertheless, the dictatorial principle of government has not by any means been weakened by it. On the contrary, the introduction of this new Constitution liberates the Leader from all Party bonds. As regards the liberties proclaimed in the new Constitution, they are not supported by any effective guarantees, and can be enjoyed only if such be the pleasure of the Leader.[2]

Thus, though the Soviet Government deems it at times useful to assert its adherence to democratic principles, nothing is more stable in fact in its otherwise unstable policy than its downright repudiation of all civic and political freedom.

Tactics of the Communist Party

The programme of the Communist Party and its principles of organization have greatly influenced its tactics. No wonder then that its methods of action, in their turn, place the Russian Communist Party altogether apart from European political parties of the ordinary traditional kind. The Russian Communist Party is a fighting, a revolutionary party. From the first this was visible in the discussions about armed insurrection, which subject was one of the causes of the split between the Bolsheviks and the *Mensheviks*.

Attitude Towards Armed Insurrection

Although many *Mensheviks* had also raised the question of armed insurrection, their ideas on this point differed materially, both psychologically and politically, from that of the Bolsheviks. The former treated it rather as a theme for philosophical and sociological speculation and historical research, whilst for the latter it was a purely practical problem. The *Mensheviks* feared lest the technical preparations for an insurrection should overshadow the political education of the masses which was their primary concern. Nothing in this respect is more striking than a remarkable letter of Lenin dated October 16, 1905. Published twenty-one years later, it is an

1 Village and town Soviets used to elect members of the congress of district Soviets; the latter elected members of the provincial congress, who, in their turn, elected members of the congresses for each Federal Republic; these latter finally elected delegates to the All-Union Congress of the Soviets.

2 The political system of the U.S.S.R., and more particularly the real significance of the new "Stalinist Constitution," is treated at greater length in the chapter entitled "Political and Economic Structure of the U.S.S.R."

important historical document.[1] It was addressed to the Fighting Committee of the Bolshevik organization in St. Petersburg at the time of the revolutionary outbreak then prevailing. After thanking the committee for its report on preparations for the insurrection, Lenin made short work of its recommendations.

"All your schemes"—he wrote—"give me the impression of vulgar red tape. In a venture of this kind it is futile to wrangle about schemes of organization, about the functions of the Fighting Committee, or its prerogatives. What is wanted is wild energy, and again energy. I am horrified, really horrified I can swear to you, to see that for over six months talk has been going on about bombs without a single one being made. . . . Go to the youth. Form at once and everywhere fighting squads, among students and especially among workers. Let these squads of from three to ten people be organized without delay. Let them arm themselves at once, as best they can, with revolvers, knives, or rags soaked in petrol for arson. Let them at once choose their leaders and get in touch, if possible, with the Petersburg Fighting Committee. Do not insist on any formalities, for goodness' sake pooh-pooh all schemes and send all sorts of functions, rights, and privileges to all the devils. Do not demand adhesion to the Russian *Social-Democratic* Workers' Party at all cost —that would be an absurd demand—in an armed insurrection. If in a month or two the Fighting Committee has not at least 200 or 300 detachments ready in St. Petersburg, it will mean that it is a dead body. Then it must be buried. Propagandists must supply each detachment with the simplest recipes for bombs and a most elementary description of the kind of work to be performed, and then leave the performance to them. Some will at once undertake the assassination of a spy, or blow-up a police station, others a raid on a bank for the purpose of confiscating funds for the insurrection;

1 This letter was published for the first time in 1926 in the *Memorial Miscellany for Lenin,* and reproduced subsequently in volume viii of his *Collected Works* (1929, pp. 326 and ff.). The President of the Fighting Committee to whom the letter was addressed in 1905 was named Skrypnik. As a result of the Revolution of 1917 he was given prominent posts: he was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau of its Ukrainian section. In the Soviet administration he held the posts of member of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Republic and Chairman of the Ukrainian State Planning Commission. In 1933, under Stalin, when on the point of being accused of Ukrainian separatism, and even of betraying Moscow, this veteran Communist was driven to commit suicide. (*Pravda,* July 8, 1933.)

still others will create a diversion or remove plans, and so on. But it is indispensable to begin acquiring practice at once. Do not fear those test attacks. They may, of course, degenerate into excesses, but this is an evil of to-morrow, and our evil of to-day is our inertia, our doctrinairism, our academic sluggishness, our senile fear of initiative. Let each detachment learn its lesson for itself, be it on man-handling policemen: scores of victims will be compensated a hundred times by the advantage of having hundreds of experienced fighters who will to-morrow lead hundreds of thousands."[1]

Menshevik writings could be ransacked in vain for anything resembling this document. Lenin does not argue; he wants his men to fight, to destroy their enemies, to murder them with bludgeons, knuckle-dusters, knives, or any available weapons. Such appeals and such prescriptions could never have come from the *Mensheviks* whose principal weapons were words, spoken or written, and not knuckle-dusters and bombs.[2]

1 Not content with this brief advice, Lenin drew up, in 1905, long and detailed instructions "to the detachments of the revolutionary army":

"Detachments may be of any size, beginning with two or three men. They must arm themselves as best they can with rifles, revolvers, bombs, knuckle-dusters, sticks, petrol-soaked rags, ropes or rope ladders, spades for erecting barricades, pyroxilic swords, barbed wire, or nails (against cavalry). Even unarmed, the detachments can play a very important part: (1) by leading the crowd; (2) by attacking, when opportunity presents itself, a policeman or a stray Cossack; (3) by rescuing those arrested or wounded when there are not many policemen about; (4) by climbing to the upper floors of the houses and throwing stones or pouring boiling water on the troops. The watchword of insurrection has already been issued. To launch attacks, under favourable conditions, is not only the right but the immediate duty of every revolutionary. The assassination of spies, policemen, gendarmes, the blowing-up of police stations, the rescuing of prisoners, the confiscation of Government funds for the purpose of applying them to the needs of the insurrection—every detachment of the revolutionary army must be ready to perform all these operations. Every detachment must bear in mind that, by letting slip the opportunity that presents itself this very day for such an operation, it becomes guilty of inexcusable inaction, of sloth, and this is the greatest crime a revolutionary can commit at the time of insurrection."

2 The same difference of mentality may be seen in the attitude of the two wings of Russian Marxism towards French Jacobinism. Lenin was enamoured of it. On the eve of the November Revolution he glorified Jacobinism (*Pravda*, June 24, 1917), and later, tried to practise its watchwords and precepts, such as "War to the mansions, peace to the huts," or the outlawry of whole parties, the general system of terror, the setting up of revolutionary tribunals, etc. The attraction of Jacobinism had been felt by Lenin since 1902, when, defining a revolutionary *Social-Democrat*, he said that the latter must be like a Jacobin, devoted body and soul to the proletarian organization, and conscious of the interests of his class. This formula aroused at the time the indignation of many *Mensheviks*.

Professional Revolutionaries According to Lenin

The contents of Lenin's tract *What Is To Be Done?*, which, when published in 1902, created a sensation, show that he already attached great importance to armed insurrection, to acts of violence, and, in general, to all forms of revolutionary struggle. He says in it: "Give us a revolutionary organization and we will turn Russia upside down." Lenin derides the revolutionary dilettantes and opposes to them the "professionals" who have no other occupation than the Revolution, who organize demonstrations, and train the people for an armed rising. For Lenin the party must be composed of revolutionaries specialized in the different forms of the struggle in preparation. In no circumstances should the party "play at democracy" and waste time in electioneering. It must be grouped round its paper *The Spark*, which is to function as its directing centre. This well-drilled, unwavering revolutionary army must be ready for anything, "beginning with saving the honour, the prestige, and the traditions of the party at the time when it is most direly persecuted, and ending by the preparation, fixation, and realization of popular armed insurrection."[1]

This faith of the Bolsheviks in revolutionary violence, their confidence in the soundness of the results obtained in political and social issues by "direct action," shows that they had other spiritual ancestors besides Karl Marx.

Spiritual Ancestors of the Bolsheviks. Their Tactical Principles. "The End Justifies the Means"

The history of the Russian revolutionary movement is a long and complicated one. The second half of the XIXth century saw the birth and progress of terrorism as a method of revolutionary action. The question which arose for the younger generation of the advanced *intelligentzia* was: "Does the struggle against the antiquated régime justify resorting to every means and what are the moral limits which must not be transgressed?" The majority of the Russian revolutionaries answered it at the time by saying that "clean work requires clean hands."[2] Some, however, proclaimed that the struggle for a better future justified the use of all available means.

It was at the end of the sixties that the name of S. G. Nechaiev

1 Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, 1902, p. 136.

2 This is the expression of Nicholas Chaikovsky, leader of a "circle" which included representatives of the Russian Left-Wing youth, and which in the history of the Russian liberation movement was a centre of concentration and dispersion of revolutionary thought and action.

was first mentioned among Russian radical students. His name became for ever associated with the violent revolutionary method he preached. "We have one plan only, negative and unchangeable," wrote Nechaiev in the review *Narodnaia Rasprava* published by him outside Russia—"a plan of ruthless destruction. The shortest way to this is terrorism; we shall proceed without delay to the extermination of the monsters in shining uniforms bespattered with the people's blood. . . . But we shall not touch the Tsar. . . . We shall keep him for a solemn, cruel execution, in the presence of the liberated people, on the ruins of the State." The ideal revolutionary is portrayed by Nechaiev as a ruthless annihilator of the State and of the entire old order of things. "The revolutionary"—said Nechaiev—"is animated by one single interest, one single idea, one single passion—the Revolution. . . . He hates and despises all the manifestations and inspirations of present-day social morality. In his eyes, what is moral is that which aids the triumph of the Revolution, and that alone. All that is opposed to it is immoral and criminal. . . . His thoughts must be directed night and day towards one single objective—ruthless destruction. . . . He is not a revolutionary if he desires to spare anything in this world where he must hate everything equally. All the worse for him if he be handicapped by ties of blood, friendship, or love; he is not a revolutionary if these can stay his hand."

Nechaiev's "ideal type of revolutionary" and Lenin's "professional revolutionary" are twin brothers. The two portraits are painted in the same colours. Stalin, a living embodiment of Lenin's "professional revolutionary," belongs to the same spiritual family.

Men of such moral calibre could never doubt that all means were justified in fighting the existing régime. Nechaiev's revolutionary activity proved that he translated his words into deeds. His famous *Catechism*[1] proclaims that: "In its march towards complete, general, and ruthless destruction, the revolutionary organization must make common cause with the wild world of the brigands, the only genuine revolutionaries in Russia." It is significant that at a much later date, Lenin, in his instructions to his party comrades, did not reject the eventuality of a co-operation between the revolutionaries and "the bandits."

1 There are some doubts as to the actual authorship of the *Catechism*. By some it is attributed to the famous anarchist Bakunin. Even if the *Catechism* was not Nechaiev's own work, it bears strong marks of his influence, and he was eager to disseminate it in Russia.

It had not escaped Lenin's attention that "the proceeds of minor robberies go chiefly, if not exclusively, to support the expropriators themselves" and that "the riff-raff, the *Lumpen-Proletariat* and the Anarchist groups make use of this form of social struggle." Yet, replying to some of his colleagues who thought that armed robbery of banks, to which the Bolsheviks resorted more and more frequently after 1906, threatened to obliterate all distinction between revolutionaries and professional bandits, Lenin also said: "Guerilla warfare is said to reduce the class-conscious proletariat to the level of degraded, drunken vagabonds. This is true. Yet it only follows from this that the proletarian party must never regard guerilla warfare as its sole, or even its principal, means of struggle, but that it must be combined and in harmony with the principal methods of struggle and ennobled by the educational and organizing influence of Socialism."[1]

In the preface to one of the volumes of *Materials Serving for the History of the Revolutionary Movement in Russia in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* published by the Bolsheviks, the sovietic historian Pokrovsky, who was at one time Soviet Commissar for Education, recalls the career of Pugachev, half-bandit and half-revolutionary, who headed a social revolt in the reign of Catherine II, and concludes unhesitatingly: "There is no need for us to blush for our distant ancestors of the XVIIIth century." Pokrovsky knows perfectly well that Pugachev's revolt was accompanied by countless deeds of violence, by murder and pillage, but this leaves him unruffled. In the eyes of the Soviet historian, the atrocities committed by the "ancestors" of the Bolshevik are amply justified by the fact that they were directed against a class enemy. "Pugachev," says Pokrovsky, "was merciless indeed, but only towards one single class, the landed nobility."[2]

It is true that Lenin always protested against those who stigmatized his tactics as being as amoral as those of Nechaiev. Nevertheless, in his eyes, anything was ethical that tended to demolish the old order of things based on human exploitation. "He who is afraid of soiling his hands"—wrote Lenin—"must not go in for politics. Naïve people with clean hands stand in the way of political success." "We must admit"—he said elsewhere—"that one can argue and prove that certain forms of civil war are inexpedient. But from the

1 Lenin, "Guerilla Warfare", in *The Proletarian*, 1906, No. 5.
2 Preface to the miscellany *The Age of Pugachev*, vol. i, Moscow, 1926.

point of view of Marxism it is absolutely inadmissible to condemn them in the name of morality."[1] Much as he did not wish his methods to be likened to those advocated by Nechaiev, Lenin's views on revolutionary ethics remain obviously akin to what Nechaiev preached and strove to practise. One cannot help agreeing with Trotsky who long before Lenin's accession to power said that there was a close affinity between the "general principles" of Nechaiev's *Catechism* and the revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks.

Even Soviet literature, which merely reflects official ideas, came to recognize this close affinity between Bolshevik tactics and Nechaiev's methods. Under Stalin some Soviet historians have applied themselves to the task of rehabilitating Nechaiev's memory. One of them, A. Gambarov, has even gone so far as to affirm most emphatically that Nechaiev's ideas "have found their full expression in the methods and tactics of the Russian Communist Party in the course of the twenty-five years of its existence."[2]

Recently Stalin seems to have tried to find new spiritual ascendents. The conceptions of Pokrovsky, whose historical judgment was previously regarded as infallible, are now declared erroneous. He is reproached with having failed to appreciate the creative powers of the Russian people at their real value. At present Stalin is inclined to the belief that his great XVIIIth-century forerunner was not Pugachev but Russia's chief reformer, Peter the Great. Owing to this new spiritual ancestry of the Leader, the recent vogue of the "world of the brigands" is declining. In an article entitled "Falsification of the National Past," *Pravda* thunders against the poet Demian Biedny, who was quite recently enjoying the status of Poet Laureate in the Soviet Union. "Demian Biedny's gravest fault"—says *Pravda*—"consists in the fact that his play (*The Heroes*) is an endeavour to exalt the wretched brigands of Kievian Russia as a positive and even revolutionary element of our history. . . . Is it not sufficiently known what kind of people these brigands were? Far from being the ferment of revolutionary struggle, they were only out for gain. . . . It is in the books and tracts of Bakunin, Nechaiev, and other Anarchists that bandits are glorified as pioneers of the revolutionary principle in the Russian people. These ideas have also found, at a later date, some echo among the *déclassé* elements of all sorts. . . . Now, in a sudden fit of naïveté, Demian Biedny puts forward a theory of his own about the fruitful activity of

1 Lenin, "Guerilla Warfare." 2 *Discussions on Nechaiev*, Moscow, 1926.

those bandits in Russia's past; and he obviously means to parade them as genuine revolutionaries of Kievian Russia and to link up their epoch with modern times."[1] This Soviet bard, once lauded to the skies, has fallen into disgrace for failing to realize soon enough in 1936 that the song required of him but a year ago had ceased to charm the ear of the Leader and that a new tune was demanded. *Pravda* itself was slow to take the cue, for it offered its columns to Demian Biedny to explain the revolutionary significance and sound historical picture of the "heroes" of his play. For their own part, Soviet critics were uncertain what attitude to adopt, until the day they were to be harshly admonished. For had they not described Demian Biedny's play as "a popular satiric play all of a piece" and as "true popular musical comedy"?

In view of the Leader's new attitude towards national history, it is possible that the Government may seek to impose on the masses a new "revolutionary morality" different from that which had animated the "Old Guard" of the Bolsheviks. Be that as it may, however, Stalin's own behaviour suggests that Nechaiev's "ideal revolutionary type" and Lenin's "professional revolutionary" will continue to serve, as they did in the past, as moral standards for the rulers themselves.

Nechaiev is not the only precursor of the Bolsheviks whose name should not be omitted in any account of the spiritual origins of Bolshevism. There is Tkachev, a contemporary of his, nicknamed "the leader of the Russian Jacobins," who played a minor part in revolutionary circles. His followers were not numerous, and the ideas which he preached in his review *The Alarm Bell* (*Nabat*), published abroad, attracted but little attention at first. They were, however, much appreciated by the founders of the Bolshevik Party.

Tkachev also held that everything was permitted to the genuine revolutionary. Besides, his theory of the constitution of a revolutionary body was akin to that of the Bolsheviks. He held that only a conspiracy carried out by a small resolute minority could bring about the triumph of the Revolution. The party called upon to achieve this must be completely centralized, well-disciplined, permeated with hierarchical principles; it must not hesitate at using violence and must be able to strike its persecutors and avenge their victims. "Neither now, nor in the future can a people left to its own resources accomplish a social revolution," wrote Tkachev.

1 *Pravda*, November 15, 1936.

"Nor can a leaderless community erect a new world on the ruins of the old. . . . Only a revolutionary minority can maintain such a role and such a mission."[1] These words were truly prophetic. They seem to foreshadow the advent of Lenin, that ardent admirer of the Jacobin spirit, as well as the birth of the Bolshevik Party with all its notorious characteristics: its profound distrust for any political sense of the masses themselves; its centralized and essentially authoritarian structure; its thorough re-shaping of the existing social order by means of despotic decrees and acts of violence. "In reading Tkachev," says one of his Soviet biographers, "one forgets that his works are half a century old; and one is irresistibly reminded of the literature of the period when the slogan was pronounced: '*Whoever does not work neither shall he eat,*' that is, of the Bolshevik period."[2]

Many events which immediately followed the *coup d'état* of November 1917 might appear surprising if one overlooked the spiritual ancestry of Bolshevism. The tactics of the Russian Communists become more comprehensible from the fact that their forerunners were not only the men from whom all Socialists claim descent, but also characters like Nechaiev, Tkachev, and the bandits of past Russian history. It is from this heritage that Lenin drew his conviction that everything was permissible in the struggle against class enemies. According to his mentality, any other attitude was equivalent to giving up the struggle. Lenin stigmatized as "priestly hypocrisy" any doubts occasioned by his methods. "We must ask everyone"—he asserted—"What are you for? For the Revolution or against it? If you oppose it, you will be shot on the spot. If you support it, come in and work with us." Having gone over to Lenin's camp, Trotsky said in his turn: "Revolution is what it is just because in it everything is reduced to the simple alternative: Life or death."[3] Stalin, "leader of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and of the world proletariat," is still acting in the same spirit.

A Government that knows no check in the pursuit of its ends is odious in its amorality, but its actual power is only the more for-

1 These views, which abound in *The Alarm Bell*, are to be found also, expressed as clearly as was possible under the conditions of censorship, in the articles written by Tkachev for reviews published in Russia. See, for example, his article "Broken Illusions" in *Dielo*, 1868, No. 12.

2 B. Kozmin, *P. N. Tkachev and the Revolutionary Movement of the Sixties*, Moscow, 1922, p. 113.

3 L. Trotsky, *My Life*, Berlin, 1930, vol. ii, p. 211.

midable. Its might cannot be compared with that of any Government restricted by a complex of moral or written laws.[1]

[1] Those who believed sincerely that all means were permissible in the struggle for a better future had no doubt peculiarly constructed minds. Trotsky one day remarked that "a trained eye could, with a very small percentage of errors, distinguish a Bolshevik from a *Menshevik* by his appearance alone." It is only imaginative literature, however, that can lay bare, down to their inmost depths, the minds of these people whose mental strictness never allowed them to doubt in the least that all means were permissible in the struggle against their enemies. In fact, Russian literature attacked this problem with its customary vigour. It is true that love and creation, and not hatred and destruction, are its main themes. Yet in a number of works by Russian authors elements can be found which enable us to understand both the spiritual origins of Bolshevism and its psychology. Dostoievsky was the first to portray the prototype of the Bolsheviks. Raskolnikov, the principal character of his novel *Crime and Punishment*, is trying to persuade himself that "not only great men, but all those who have something new to say, must needs be criminals." He decides to make a terrible test, and murders an old woman-moneylender in order to see whether he will "have the courage, when it comes to killing a human being, to do so without suffering, without pity, without remorse." In the end he fails in the test. His conscience brings about the punishment of his crime. Another novel of Dostoievsky—*The Demons* (*The Possessed*)—is based on a sinister episode in the revolutionary career of Nechaiev, who ordered his followers to kill the student Ivanov because the latter did not see eye to eye with his revolutionary leader. Nechaiev is portrayed in the novel under the name of Peter Verkhovensky, who says: "We shall satisfy all desires, we shall throw the doors open to drunkenness, to slanders, to denunciations, to unheard-of debauchery, we shall strangle genius in its cradle. We shall reduce everything to the same level, to absolute equality." In 1905, when the official proclamation of freedom of the Press enabled Russian literature to breathe more freely, the painful problem, "Is everything permissible in the struggle against the enemy?" was openly debated. It was reviewed by Andreiev, by Merezhkovsky, by Andrei Bely, by Savinkov (Ropshin), and others. One of the characters in Savinkov's novel, *That Which Was Not*, says: "Victories are gained not by books but by blows of the fist; not by groaning and lamenting, but by bombs and machine-guns, by bloodshed. People refuse to understand that blood is always blood whatever you do to conceal it. 'As little blood as possible,' they say. I call that Jesuitism." Savinkov's novel, published in 1912, was reprinted in Soviet Russia in 1927, after the author's death. It is curious to note that in the Soviet edition all the most forcible passages where other characters deny the right to kill were suppressed. Bolshevik censorship seeks to eliminate from Russian life the ancient commandment "Thou shalt not kill." After the civil war many were the people in Russia who had shed human blood. These men came to occupy positions in the front rank. Soviet literature has accorded a prominent position to these people who are stained with human blood. Despite all obstacles, by resorting to indirect means, it has standardized this type of the victorious revolutionary holding the commanding levers in the Communist Party and everywhere. This Daniel Fibikh has done most outspokenly, if not better than the others, in his novel, *Intoxication* (*Ugar*). The principal character of the book, Sergei Chagin, says: "It is the most intelligent, the strongest, those who are in authority, that lay down the law. In the past the Tsar dictated the laws to protect himself; now it is the Bolsheviks who protect themselves. In the past the revolutionaries were struck; now it is the counter-revolutionaries' turn. Everyone has his own way. For my part I snap my fingers at the law. I make my own laws. I do what I like;

Demagogical Elements in Bolshevik Tactics

The creed according to which everything is permissible to revolutionaries, has enabled the Bolsheviks to do what representatives of other political doctrines would never have dared. With a demagogic aim in view they had no hesitation in appropriating lightheartedly the programme of their opponents even when they entirely disagreed with it. In this respect the history of their agrarian policy supplies a typical example. They had begun by rejecting outright the programme of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* who insisted on "socialization," that is, on the transfer of all the land to the peasant communes to be distributed equally among the cultivators for their personal exploitation alone, the use of paid labour being strictly prohibited. There was not a single *Social-Democrat* who did not treat this proposal with derision. Lenin was the first to reject it as an immature petty-bourgeois suggestion.

The Original Agrarian Programme of the Bolshevik Party

At the congress of 1903 Lenin proposed an agrarian programme which the party adopted. At the emancipation, in 1861, the peasants were granted in most instances a little less land than they had previously cultivated. Lenin only asked for the return of the "cuts" to them, i.e. of the plots of land that had been detached from their holdings in 1861. This proposal was quite modest compared even with that put forward before the Revolution by the Liberals of the *Constitutional-Democratic* Party ("*K.D.*").[1] The reason for this

if anyone wants to oppose me I knock him down and sweep him out of the way." During the period of industrialization, when even some exalted Bolshevik officials began to lose their nerve and were threatened with being reproached for "deviating from the general line" and being branded (according to Stalin's expression) as "incredulous and panicky opportunists," it was necessary to take special pains to inoculate the builders of Socialism with the principle of "everything is permissible" in order to dispel their hesitation, pity, shame, and remorse. Hence the praises dealt out by the Bolshevik leaders to Gladkov, a novelist of mediocre talent. In his novel, *Power*, which describes the construction of the Dneprostroi plant, Gladkov portrays a man who conforms to the "general line." The hero of the novel, Miron, is a convinced follower of Stalin, who regards all "feelings of pity" as "women's diseases." "Your heart won't take you far," he says. "In the struggle one must tear it out and send it to the devil. In the struggle I shall be the first to knock out anyone who retreats before complaints and blood." Such is the psychology of the leaders of the Communist Party who try their Socialist experiment on a great country.

1 See Chapter I, pp. 31–32. Herzenstein, who was this party's agrarian expert, disconcerted Lenin's partisans by showing that the restitution of the "cuts" as proposed by Lenin would increase the peasant land area by a paltry figure of 7½ to 9 million hectares.

moderation can be found in Lenin's theoretical views as set forth in his work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899). In it Lenin maintained that large agricultural undertakings stimulate the economic progress of a country much more than small peasant holdings. Hence in the interests of a speedier evolution of Capitalism in Russia—as an essential preliminary to the establishment of Socialism—no encouragement ought to be given to backward forms of agriculture to the detriment of more advanced ones.

During the disturbances of 1905, Lenin realized that his proposal limited only to restoring the "cuts" to the peasants was a "shameful episode" in his revolutionary career. Without any intermediate stage, he therefore passed to the "confiscation" of all the lands belonging to non-peasant landowners. This demand was, in 1905, officially inserted in the programme of the Bolshevik Party. Notwithstanding all this, both during the agrarian disorders of 1905 and during the Revolution of 1917, the peasantry remained indifferent to the propaganda of the *Social-Democrats* and definitely favoured the agrarian proposals of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*.

Lenin Borrows the Agrarian Programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries

Lenin was not at a loss to find a way out of this awkward situation. The agrarian programme of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*, he said, is not ours at all, but we shall not hesitate in making it ours, if necessary, to achieve the triumph of the Soviet Revolution and to win over the peasants to our side. Four years later Lenin declared explicitly that the November Revolution had triumphed only because the Bolsheviks had adopted the agrarian programme of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* and thereby had won over the peasants: "Why have we been victorious?"—asked Lenin at the IIIrd Congress of the Communist International (June 22–July 12, 1921).—"Because ten million workers and peasants were under arms and refused to fight any more. They followed us because we threw out the slogan of 'Immediate peace at any price.' But we did not owe our triumph to that fact alone. We won because, instead of applying our own agrarian programme, we adopted and carried out that of the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*. That is why our victory was so easy. . . Within a few weeks nine-tenths of the peasant masses came over to our side."

This did not prevent the Bolsheviks, when, later, they felt themselves strong enough to do so, from abolishing individual tenure of land and conducting an agrarian experiment to the prejudice of the peasantry and on lines entirely different from what the *Social-Revolutionaries* had proposed. Then the peasants realized that they had given their support, not to friends, but to foes posing as friends.

Amorality of the Bolsheviks in the Suppression of their Political Opponents

The amorality of the Bolsheviks, their conviction that the end justifies the means, was not only apparent during their struggle for supremacy, but was clearly evident throughout their rule. It was more obvious than ever when they wanted to get rid of real or alleged enemies. In such cases they do not shrink from most horrible cruelty.

One of the first instances of this method of ridding themselves of those whom they thought might one day become dangerous was the abominable murder—in every sense of the word—of the Imperial family. Nicholas II, his consort and five children, as well as several members of their suite, who from sheer devotion were sharing their imprisonment, were, on July 17, 1918, shot and bayoneted in the cellar of the Ipatiev House at Ekaterinburg. These executions were carried out by the officials of the local Extraordinary Commission (*Cheka*) on the decision of the Praesidium of the Ural Soviet. The details of this tragedy border on nightmare. His tragic death gave to the former Tsar, whose heart till the very last moment ached for Russia's ordeal, the veritable halo of a martyr. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party in Moscow promptly condoned the crime of the Ekaterinburg janissaries. Two days after the execution, Sverdlov, acting as President of the Central Executive Committee, telegraphed to the Ekaterinburg Bolsheviks that the Central Committee "endorses the decision of the Ural Soviet." There are even reasons for concluding that the execution of the Imperial family was decided upon, not in Ekaterinburg, but in Moscow.[1]

No other Revolution has ever dealt with a dethroned monarch

1 See N. Sokolov's book *The Murder of the Imperial Family*, in which the author, the examining magistrate appointed by Admiral Kolchak to investigate the circumstances of the assassination of the Imperial Family, has embodied the results of his inquiry.

with such utter contempt for all judicial procedure and in a manner which made it equivalent to murder most foul. The Ekaterinburg tragedy is, in truth, without precedent.

The Bolshevik doctrine that the ends justify the means leads those in power in Russia to revolting practices in many other directions.

Denunciation has been extensively resorted to by the Bolsheviks in the interest of their régime and unhesitatingly applied even where family ties should have precluded its use. Typical on this matter is the attitude of one of their heads, Mikoian. The latter has related in the paper *Constructing of the Party*, of January 15, 1938, certain passages of a confidential memorandum presented to the *Politbureau* by the chief of the political police, Iezhov, on the activities of his department. Relying on the information of Iezhov, Mikoian cites by name several persons who denounced their brothers, their husbands, and their fathers, and finds nothing better than to declare with pride: "Such facts are impossible in a bourgeois country, but here numerous examples can be cited."

There is another terrible practice exercised by the Bolshevik régime, namely, that of hostages, and of the threat of suppression of the families of those against whom they bear a grudge, or whom they wish to compel to execute their will. A vivid light has been shed on this inhuman procedure during the trial of Bukharin and his associates in March 1938.[1] The Public Prosecutor did not hesitate to accuse Iagoda, who was for a long time head of the political police, to have compelled, when in office, Dr. Levin to commit the most horrible of all crimes—the treacherous murder of the sick people confided to his care. Now, how was Iagoda able to make this old and well-known doctor do such an awful thing? It came out in the trial that it was by threatening to suppress his family.

The Bolshevik Terror

The Bolshevik terror has taken such proportions and lasted so long that it would be hard to discover in Russia any settlement which has not been the scene of the most bloodcurdling violence perpetrated by the Bolshevik chiefs against those whom they thought standing or apt to stand in their way. The new power was built up on the dead bodies of millions of human beings. In its bloodthirstiness the Bolshevik Revolution has surpassed anything that is known in the history of revolutions.

1 The details of this trial will be found on p. 247 and ff.

To appease public opinion abroad, the Bolsheviks usually plead that they resorted to "Red Terror" only by way of legitimate defence, after the first counter-revolutionary attempts against the leaders of the proletariat. In fact, immediately after the November *coup d'état* the new Government solemnly proclaimed the complete abolition of capital punishment. The first issue of the *Gazette of the Workers' and Peasants' Government*, dated November 10, 1917, contains the following announcement: "The All-Russian Congress of the Soviets has decreed: 'Capital punishment, restored at the front by Kerensky, is to be suppressed.' " Soon afterwards, however, the Bolsheviks restored and practised it on a much larger scale than did the Provisional Government. The Council of People's Commissars published, on January 21, 1918, a decree which rendered men and women of the bourgeois class liable to compulsory labour "under the control of the Red Army soldiers," who were empowered "to shoot the recalcitrants." Similarly, "counter-revolutionary agitators" were to be "executed on the spot." The decree did not provide even for a semblance of trial for these "counter-revolutionaries": it was a direct and official appeal to Red Terror without any legal procedure. Yet the first "attempts committed by the White Guards against the leaders of the proletariat" did not take place until August and September 1918, when the Bolsheviks had already been exercising for more than six months their system of terror against their "class enemies."[1] Its ideological justification—or to be more exact, the plea for its historical necessity and practical utility—was proclaimed by the Bolsheviks even before their accession to power. "The dictatorship of the proletariat"—wrote Bukharin in the programme of the Bolshevik Party which he drew up at the beginning of 1917—"is, in the hands of the workers, a sharply whetted axe. . . . Proletarian violence in all its forms, beginning with shooting . . . leads to the transformation of the human material of the capitalistic age into Communist citizens." As early as the spring of 1917 Lenin declared in numerous speeches that Socialist Revolution was impossible without the extermination of a certain section of the bourgeoisie. For his part, Trotsky, who protests to-day against

1 The first attempts against the Communist leaders committed by those whom the Bolsheviks described as counter-revolutionaries took place in the autumn of 1918. On August 30th a Socialist student named Kanegisser assassinated in St. Petersburg the Commissar of the Northern Commune, Uritsky, head of the local *Cheka*. On September 10th another Socialist, a girl, named Fanny Kaplan, made an attempt against Lenin's life and succeeded in wounding him.

Stalin's executions, advanced in a reply to Kautsky's book, *Terrorism and Communism*, the following ideological justification of terror: "The enemy must be annihilated. . . . Intimidation is a powerful means of political action; one must be a real hypocrite not to admit it."

The Bolsheviks are therefore merely drawing practical conclusions from their theories when they resort to terror. Long before the first attempts against the leaders of the proletariat, the Soviet political police, the notorious Extraordinary Commission, or *Cheka*, had been officially entrusted with the defence of the new Government by "Red Terror" (i.e. in September 1918), and "emergency measures," such as capital punishment and imprisonment without trial, became an everyday occurrence all over Russia. Trustworthy statistics of the first Soviet executions will no doubt never be published. In any case, Dzerzhinsky, President of the Extraordinary Commission, himself admitted subsequently that there had been, in the early stages of the Revolution, "disorderly bloodshed" due to the "hatred of the revolutionary proletariat against its oppressors." As if to justify the bloodshed during his administration, Dzerzhinsky wrote: "I have tried to organize the repressive activity of the revolutionary power. The Extraordinary Commission has done nothing beyond giving an intelligent direction to the avenging hand of the revolutionary proletariat."[1]

After the first attempts against the leaders of the Communist Party the Red Terror assumed formidable proportions. Even Peters, one of the leading and most bloodthirsty members of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, was obliged to confess that, after the assassination of Uritsky, "too many indiscriminate executions" took place in St. Petersburg.[2]

Once set in motion, terror as a method of "training the Communist man" has never ceased in the U.S.S.R. under Bolshevik rule. It still goes on to-day, now subsiding, now again increasing, and assuming the character of real butchery. The murder of Kirov, one of Stalin's right-hand men, in December 1934, immediately provoked a new wave of terror. The Revolution soon turned against its own men. In August 1936 and at the beginning of 1937, drastic terrorist measures, disguised though they were under apparently judicial forms, were taken by Stalin against a number of Lenin's

1 Memorandum submitted by Dzerzhinsky to the Council of People's Commissars on February 17, 1922. 2 *The Morning of Moscow*, November 17, 1918.

closest collaborators. Until the middle of 1937, terror was chiefly directed against the "old Bolsheviks," who, so far as they were not eliminated by natural death, were nearly all executed either under Stalin's direct orders or out of servility to him. Henceforward, terror struck the new social classes that had arisen from the Stalinist régime itself: engineers, railwaymen, high officials, factory directors, schoolmasters, the military, diplomats, etc. Among these groups the charges of sabotage, espionage, preparation of terrorist acts, wrecking of trains and factories, poisoning of children, workers, peasants, and Red Army soldiers, grow daily, and lead to executions with increasing frequency. Stalin seems to be as much afraid of these new men as he was of the "old Bolsheviks."

The number of victims of the Soviet repression is kept secret, but an idea of their enormous quantity may be formed from the fragmentary information obtainable on this subject. Without recalling the wholesale slaughters of the Bolsheviks during the first years of their domination, when they principally suppressed people adverse to the new régime, we will here only touch upon the imprisonments and deportations of a recent period, when the régime appears stabilized and the repression strikes only men who no longer have any bond with Imperial Russia.

An old Communist, V. Krivitsky (Walter), who occupied various important positions in the U.S.S.R., among others that of Director of the Institute of War Industries, and who, at the end of 1937, decided to leave the country, estimates as follows the number of political prisoners, not counting a multitude of deportees:

"I have heard from very reliable sources that in May of this year (1937) this number was stated to be 300,000 persons. The overwhelming majority of these are members of the Party and their families. Since that time the number has considerably increased, and has perhaps reached half a million."[1]

J. Barnes, correspondent of the *New York Herald* in Moscow, having visited Magnitogorsk, gives the following information on the number of political prisoners and of deportees (or exiles) to be found in that Siberian city alone:

"The best estimate of arrests among Magnitogorsk's 200,000 population ranges between 2,000 and 4,000 in the last twelve months. Most of the arrested were engineers or functionaries of

1 *Bulletin de l'Opposition* (Bolsheviks-Leninists), Paris, Nos. 60–61, December 1937.

official rank. Few were rank and file workers. Many of them were Communists. Magnitogorsk is full of survivors of earlier purges. One of the city's biggest buildings is the headquarters of the I.T.K. or labour correction camp, which, in scattered barracks throughout the city, hold an estimated 15,000 prisoners. On the edges of the town are the tents, shacks, huts and caves of the 'special exiles' or 'liquidated' *kulaks*, moved here in 1930 and 1931 and believed to number now between 25,000 and 30,000. Both are the special charges of the political police."[1] And yet Magnitogorsk is only one of the numerous points throughout the U.S.S.R. where political prisoners are detained; in many places—as, for instance, on the Solovetsk Islands in the White Sea—still greater numbers of them are confined.[2]

1 *New York Herald*, Paris edition, March 10, 1938.

2 For political prisoners in Soviet Russia see also pp. 163–165 and 206.

The old régime in Russia was often severely censured abroad for the sternness with which it put down "subversive" movement. Pre-war Russian publications belonging to the opposition furnished very interesting statistics in this connection, which cannot be suspected of having been toned down out of sympathy for the Tsarist régime. They state that from 1826 to 1902, 192 persons have been executed for political reasons, which gives an average of 2·4 executions a year. The revolutionary outburst of 1905–1906 having given rise to very numerous "expropriations," acts of terrorism, and military revolts, the number of death sentences inflicted for political crimes reached for the period 1905–1910 the aggregate figure of 3,112, while 1,240 persons were shot without judgment in 1905–1906. In 1910 the total number of persons deported on political grounds by Government order was 22,568. [See articles by A. Ventin and D. Zhbankov in the St. Petersburg Review *Sovremenny Mir*, December 1910 and April 1911.] These figures are totally incommensurable when compared to the hecatombs of Soviet executions from 1918 to our days.

Information on the harsh conditions of life of political prisoners in Soviet Russia may be found in two pamphlets published by Dietz Nachfolger, Berlin, *Der Terror gegen die Sozialistischen Parteien in Russland und Georgien* (1925) and *Die Politischen Gefangenen in der Sowjetunion* (1930). Under the Tsarist régime, if there were incomparably fewer political prisoners, they none the less were also treated rigorously, as recorded by the Russian authors Dostoievsky, Chekhov and Doroshevich and the American G. Kennan (*Siberia and the Exile System*, 1891). Truthful as their dismal descriptions were, they must, however, be placed side by side with other accounts, showing that in many cases the treatment of the exiles was very much less severe. Thus, for instance, Lenin's widow, Krupskaia, relates the following in her *Memories of Lenin* (Moscow, 1932). When he was deported to Siberia in 1897–1899, the future dictator gave legal consultations on the strength of his university degree. "Strictly speaking," Krupskaia writes, "Vladimir Iliitch had not the right to do so, having been deported, but it was then the era of Liberalism. Besides, the deported men were not at all watched over." The Treasury gave Lenin an allocation of 8 roubles (17 shillings, or 4 U.S.A. dollars, in pre-war currency) a month, and for that sum he could get "a

Russian Communist Party—a Party of Permanent Social Experimentation

A fighting party by its doctrine and tactics, lacking a stable programme but possessing a military organization, and true to the motto, "the end justifies the means," the Russian Communist Party was inevitably to become a body of social experimenters. In the course of twenty years it has extended its experiments to all fields of life: not only to economics, but to family relations, to education, to literature, to art, and in general to all spiritual and moral issues. These multifarious activities, often contradictory and mutually exclusive, are all dictated by a desire to maintain at any price the "dictatorship of the proletariat." They are alike in their unquestionable daring and no less unquestionable violence. There is at present no reason to believe that this period of continuous experimentation is drawing to a close. Life of the vast social organism created in the U.S.S.R. is teeming with so many discordances and utter contradictions that the Government will still often be tempted to seek its salvation by drastically intervening against the natural course or, as might almost be said, by surgical operations, which constitute its favourite mode of procedure.

The Bolsheviks Compare Themselves with Peter the Great

Of late, the Bolsheviks have become more and more prone to compare themselves with Peter the Great, who, in his day, gave Russia such a powerful impetus. The reforms of this first Russian Emperor were also marked by violence. They imposed on the country a great effort and enormous sacrifices of human life and material wealth. They must have impressed contemporaries as a revolutionary tempest launched from the throne. In his novel, *Peter the First*, the talented Soviet writer Alexis Tolstoi tries to paint Peter as a Bolshevik. He strives to explain and justify the acts of

clean room, food, and his linen washed and mended. A sheep was killed for his needs, and he ate mutton till none was left. He also was provided with milk and dairy produce in sufficient quantity for him and his dog." He went out shooting, called on people in the neighbouring villages. He got all the papers and the books he wanted (Krupskaia, *Memories of Lenin*, pp. 27–28).

the Soviet Government by comparison with those of that great reformer.[1]

Apparent analogies are dangerous and usually misleading. Though the reforms of Peter the Great, carried out during a war with a powerful enemy when the slightest delay might have proved fatal to Russia, assumed a violent character, they were essentially concordant with the historical evolution of the State. The great reformer merely precipitated an evolution, which was distinctly taking shape before his accession. Peter the Great, who carried out his reforms very hurriedly, often had to admit that they were "undertaken without much reflection." This caused enormous sacrifice of every conceivable nature, but undeterred he more than once had to remodel what at first had appeared perfect to him. Despite such jolts and jars, Peter invariably remained attached to his aim, his "general line": Russia's europeanization. Minor failures did not prevent his opening so large a "window to Europe" that it cannot entirely be closed even by the present-day endeavours of the Bolsheviks to isolate the Russian people from intercourse with the Western world. Conversely, the Bolsheviks had repeatedly to admit that their "general line" was wrong, and on several occasions radically modified it.

Thus a comparison with Peter the Great goes to show once more the fundamental defect of Bolshevism. The measures of the Soviet Government are violent not merely in form, but also very often in substance. It could not be otherwise, for the Bolshevik Party has broken outright with Russia's historical past and embarked upon experiments which were obviously opposed to the organic evolution of the country.

1 The Eurasianists—a school of thought that arose after 1917 among Russian émigrés—maintain that Russia is neither Europe nor Asia, but Eurasia, and that therefore the ways of purely European development are alien to her. They, too, have not hesitated to describe Peter the Great in their works as "a crowned Bolshevik."

CHAPTER IV

The Political and Economic Structure of the U.S.S.R.[1]

Soviet Régime More Solid than Expected

Following their victory over the Provisional Government, the Bolshevik leaders were far from sure that they would remain long in power. Soon after the November Revolution, Trotsky, one of its principal authors, declared: "Either the Russian Revolution will bring on the European revolution, or else we shall be overthrown!" All the central committees of the Party shared this opinion: "Without a Socialist revolution in the West, our Socialist Republic is threatened with doom!" In reply to this declaration by a prominent member of the Central Committee, Stalin could only say: "We

1 Whereas Imperial Russia had an area of 21,784,000 square kilometres (or about 8,700,000 square miles), the U.S.S.R. (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics) covers only 21,353,101 square kilometres (or about 8,540,000 square miles). This shrinking of territory by 160,000 square miles, subsequent to the Revolution, and the War, was due to the loss of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, a large part of Poland (which became independent), Bessarabia (which was incorporated in Rumania), and part of Transcaucasia (which was returned to Turkey).

The population of Imperial Russia on the eve of the War was estimated at 175,000,000, and even as high as 182,000,000. The territory occupied to-day by the U.S.S.R. had a population on January 1, 1914, of 139,700,000.

Exact figures of the population of the U.S.S.R. at the present date are not available, as the census operations effected in 1937 have been nullified, and the last census returns made public were those for 1926, but it may be estimated that the population of the Soviet Union within its present frontiers has grown as follows:

1897 (Census) ..	104,000,000
1914 (January 1st)	139,700,000
1917 (January 1st) ..	141,700,000
1920 (Census August 28th)	131,600,000
1922 (January 1st) ..	131,700,000
1926 (Census December 27th) ..	147,100,000
1929 (January 1st)	154,000,000

Since the last-mentioned date it may be assumed that the population has increased at the rate of 2 per cent per annum, or by nearly 3,000,000 a year. During recent

have staked on a European revolution, but you are counting by weeks, whereas we are counting by months!" This exchange of views took place at the beginning of 1918. A little later, in March of the same year, Lenin declared openly at the VIIth Congress of the Party: "Unless there is a revolution in Germany, we are doomed!"[1]

The adversaries of the Bolsheviks in Russia, as in other countries, believed still less in the solidity of the Soviet régime. They were convinced that the political and social "Utopia" installed by the Bolsheviks could not last long. Twenty years have passed, however, since the advent of the Soviets to power in Russia, and this period has been sufficiently long to show that the régime set up by the Bolsheviks possesses certain elements of stability, however different may be its civil, juridical, social, and economic conditions from those which are familiar elsewhere.

Soviet Constitution Merely one of Pure Form

What, then, are the bases of the political and economic status established in Soviet Russia at the end of 1917, and which remained without modification down to December 5, 1936, the date of the ratification of the new Constitution, which modified, more or less profoundly, certain parts of it?

In studying the political régime existing in the U.S.S.R. down to

years the increase in population has slowed down somewhat. *The U.S.S.R. Handbook* (London, 1936, p. 53), drafted by sovietic specialists, puts the population at 165,700,000 for January 1, 1933. On January 1, 1936, the population of the U.S.S.R. was estimated at 170,000,000. (On this subject see also footnote on p. 203.)

The percentage of the urban population may be set forth as follows:

Within Old Frontiers	*Per cent*	*Within Present Limits*	*Per cent*
1724	3	1914	18·4
1812	4·4	1917	21·7
1851	7·8	1920	14·7
1878	9·2	1922	16·2
1890	12·8	1926	17·9
1910	13·7	1929	18·7

Thus the percentage of the Russian urban population has registered a steady increase, and its growth was especially rapid during the years immediately before the Revolution. After the new Bolshevik Revolution the urban population dropped below previous levels, and it was only in the fifteenth year of the Soviet régime (1932) that it returned to its 1917 level (which has since been exceeded). According to Soviet figures, the urban population now represents 25 per cent of the total.

1 Taken from the shorthand report of the Congress, p. 18.

the end of 1936—and also in examining the new "Stalin Constitution," as it is called—it must not be overlooked that the men at the head of the Soviet State are firmly convinced that they have the right to do anything they think fit in order to achieve their ends. They are therefore little inclined to believe themselves really bound by any juridical forms. Under these conditions the official constitutional régime, and the rules of procedure officially imposed, have not the same value in the U.S.S.R. as in other modern constitutional States. Moreover, it must be added that the legal import of the Soviet Constitutions is practically reduced to a shadow by the fact that the U.S.S.R. is governed not only by the laws of the State, but also by the decisions of the Communist Party, which latter, however, do not figure among the legislative texts.

It is not rare, in certain other countries, for the legal order to differ from the *de facto* political régime, but in the U.S.S.R. the latter goes so far as to be substituted to the written Constitution, and to become itself the real Constitution, although not a written one.

The "Federation of Independent National Republics"

Immediately after its establishment, the Soviet Government proclaimed the principle of self-determination for all the peoples inhabiting the territory of the former Russian Empire. In compliance with this principle, the Soviet Commonwealth was organized in the form of a free federation of nationalities, and still retains this appearance. According to the Constitution of 1918 it received the name of Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, or R.S.F.S.R. This Constitution served as a model for other Socialist republics established by the Bolsheviks (Ukraine, White Russia, the Transcaucasian Federation, and the Central Asiatic Republics).

Pursuant to the adoption in 1923 of a new Constitution, all these Soviet States were combined into a broader federation, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, or U.S.S.R., the word "Russian" having been excluded from the official title of the federation to emphasize the repudiation by it of any nationalistic predominance. The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, or R.S.F.S.R., was thus reduced to the position of one of the component units of the commonwealth.

The U.S.S.R. is federated in several superposed degrees, as most of its constitutive elements themselves have federal structure. Although the various component nationalities are constituted into

separate political units they do not all possess the same rank within the hierarchical structure.[1]

The "Union Republics"

The maximum of rights is enjoyed by the "Union Republics." Under the Constitution of 1936, the U.S.S.R. is composed of eleven such republics, as those of (*a*) Ukraine; (*b*) White Russia; (*c*) Georgia; (*d*) Armenia; (*e*) Azerbeidzhan; (*f*) of the Kazakhs; (*g*) of the Kirghiz; (*h*) of the Uzbeks; (*i*) of the Turkmens; (*j*) of the Tadzhiks; and, lastly, the largest and most complex of the sovietic States: (*k*) the R.S.F.S.R., where the Great Russian nationality predominates, but within which, like enclaves, are sixteen other self-governing national republics, and a whole series of autonomous provinces and circuits inhabited by different nationalities and tribes.[2] Legally, the "Union Republics" have not only the right to manage local affairs independently, and to take part, through their representatives, in the joint direction of the U.S.S.R., but they even have the right to "dispose freely of themselves, even to the extent of seceding from the Union" (as confirmed by the Constitution of 1936 in Article 17).[3]

1 In execution of a decision of the Soviet Government, dated March 19, 1918, the capital of the Union was transferred from St. Petersburg to Moscow. As to St. Petersburg, its name was changed into Leningrad on January 26, 1924.

2 Before the Constitution of 1936 came into operation, the Republics of the Kirghiz and of the Uzbeks were part of the R.S.F.S.R., and the Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbeidzhan Republics were grouped into a Transcaucasian Federative Republic, which was a member of the Union. L. Beria, who was placed at the head of the Transcaucasian Republic, explained its suppression by the fact that it had attained the object for which it was created. This is apparently the first time in history that a State has been suppressed for such a reason.

3 The following figures show the distribution of the population according to nationalities, among the "Union Republics," as they existed before the changes introduced by the Constitution of 1936:

	Total Population (Millions)	*Great Russians Per cent*	*Autochthonous Population Per cent*
R.S.F.S.R.	116	82·70	82·70
Ukraine	33	9·23	80·02
White Russia	5·6	7·70	80·62
Transcaucasia	7·2	5·74	81·60
Usbekistan	5·0	5·60	76·00
Turkmenistan	1·3	7·50	72·00
Tadzhikistan	1·3	0·80	78·40

This table has been composed from Niedermayer-Semjonow's work, *Sowjet-*

Autonomous Republics

The second category of national territorial formations comprises the "Autonomous Republics." These are constituted by those territories belonging to one or the other of the "Union Republics," but peopled by national minorities. Under the constitutional reform of December 1936, these Autonomous Republics are thus distributed: sixteen on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R., one in that of the Ukraine, two in that of Georgia, one in that of Azerbeidzhan, and one in that of the Uzbeks.[1] The Autonomous Republics have not the right of self-determination "to the point of secession," but they have representatives on the Council of Nationalities of the U.S.S.R., they are "independent in the management of local affairs," and

union, eine geopolitische Problemstellung, Berlin, 1934, entirely based on Soviet statistics. The population figures have been revised and brought down to date.

According to the *U.S.S.R. Handbook* (1936, p. 55), drafted by sovietic specialists, there exist in Soviet Russia 180 nationalities, of whom the most important are (according to the 1926 census):

	Total in U.S.S.R.	*Per cent of total Population*
Great Russians	77,700,000	52·9
Ukranians	31,100,000	21·2
White Russians	4,700,000	3·2
Kazakhs	3,900,000	2·7
Usbeks	3,900,000	2·6
Tartars	2,900,000	1·9
Jews ..	2,600,000	1·7
Georgians	1,800,000	1·2
Turkmens	1,700,000	1·1
Armenians	1,500,000	1·0

As to the linguistic index, the principal groups of the population are, according to the same authority:

Great Russians	84,100,000	57·2
Ukranians	27,500,000	18·7
Usbeks	4,000,000	2·7
Kazakhs	3,900,000	2·7
Tartars ..	3,500,000	2·4
White Russians	3,400,000	2·3

The R.S.F.S.R. represented (in 1926) 68½ per cent of the total population of the Union.

The Ukranians were formerly designated as Little Russians.

1 Under the Constitution of 1936, a certain number of nationalities have been promoted to a higher rank. Instead of being organized in "autonomous provinces" they are now "autonomous republics." This is the case of the peoples of Keme (Zyrians), Bari (Cheremisses), Kabardino-Balkaria, Northern Ossetia, and Checheno-Ingouchia.

participate, through their representatives, in the administration of the "Union Republic" to which they are attached.[1]

Minor Autonomous Divisions

Lastly, a third—and lesser—degree of autonomous rights is accorded to the nationalities dispersed in little groups over the territories of the Soviet Republics. Such lesser rights are enjoyed by autonomous provinces (*oblast* or *kraï*), "national" circuits (*okrug*), "national" districts (*rayon*), and even "national" villages ("national" referring here to racial and linguistic peculiarities). These lesser "national" units vary in number from time to time. All these nationalities possess only limited rights to manage their local affairs, and—even in this restricted domain—their independence is diminished by the fact that they are subject to the control of the administrative bodies of the "Union Republic" or of the autonomous republics ruling the territory in which their "enclave" is situated.

The Constitution of 1936 Aims at Stabilizing the Federative Composition of the U.S.S.R.

The 1936 Constitution stipulated that in future the national federative composition of the U.S.S.R. could be modified only by a complicated procedure instituted for the revision of the constitutional laws as a whole. This indirect prevention as to future rearrangement of the territory is closely bound up with the governing idea of the new Constitution: to consolidate as far as possible the present situation, as it has been created.[2]

While the Constitution of 1936 modifies, and to a certain degree simplifies, the federative composition of the U.S.S.R., at the same time it determines the exact limits of the Union, whereas the Constitution of 1923, which was previously in application, did not give it strictly juridically fixed frontiers. The 1923 Constitution recognized the right of any "Socialist republic," no matter what its

1 Practically each republic is administratively divided into provinces or regions (*oblast* or *kraï*). These provinces and regions are in turn divided into districts (*rayon*), towns, and villages. The provinces and districts correspond, in the hierarchical sense, to the British terms of counties and rural districts, but are in each case enormously larger. There is also another type of territorial division—either of a republic or of a province—the *okrug*, which is destined to single out a minor nationality, and which we will here call a circuit.

2 This provision is akin to the Decree of May 27, 1926, which prohibited changes in the names of towns, villages, stations, etc.

origin, to adhere to the U.S.S.R. It thus emphasized and demonstrated its international and revolutionary character. Stalin's Constitution makes no mention of any such right. It merely sets forth the list of Socialist republics which form part of the U.S.S.R.

"Independent" Management of Local Affairs

The powers belonging to the Soviet Union and those granted to the different "Union Republics" are delimited as follows.

A certain category of affairs is exclusively administered by the central government of the Union, being distributed among the various "Pan-Unionist" Commissariats of the People (Government Departments) in Moscow. These commissariats have at their immediate service local organizations throughout the U.S.S.R., which are outside the jurisdiction of the local territorial republics. Under the 1936 Constitution there are eight of these Pan-Unionist commissariats, which deal respectively with national defence, foreign affairs, foreign trade, communications (chiefly responsible for the railways), other means of communication (postal, telegraphic, and telephonic), water transport, heavy industry, and national defence industries.

The Central Government of the Union exercises its jurisdiction over another category of affairs which are, however, not handled exclusively by its officials. They are directed from Moscow by the so-called "Commissariats of the People for the Union Republics" (which, prior to the 1936 Constitution, were known as "Unified Commissariats"). These commissariats do not administer their respective branches from Moscow directly, but through the corresponding People's Commissariats in each of the Soviet Republics, the latter being in each case subordinated to the former. In this way a certain degree of decentralization has been attained. By virtue of the Constitution of 1936, there exist ten "Commissariats of the People for the Union Republics," which deal respectively with the food industry, the light industries, the forest industry, agriculture, the *sovkhozes*, finance, internal commerce, internal affairs (including among other things, the roads), justice, and public health.

Lastly, certain affairs are—at least in principle—left entirely to the jurisdiction of the various Union Republics. Among these the 1936 Constitution places education, local industries, local public service undertakings, and national insurance. In each of the Union

Republics these four administrative fields are directed by autonomous commissariats, called "Republican Commissariats."[1]

At this point the Republics' autonomy, meagre as it is, reaches its limit. Practically speaking, the Central Government now handles all important administrative matters, and local freedom is being reduced to the mere right of each of the various nationalities of the U.S.S.R. to use its particular language.

Analogous relations exist between the Union Republics and the autonomous republics which form part of them.[2]

1 Under the 1918 Constitution, these local self-governing commissariats were six in number, and dealt with local (1) internal affairs, (2) justice, (3) education, (4) agriculture, (5) public health, and (6) social insurance. In 1929, however, a "unified commissariat" for the Union Republics was created for agriculture, and in this domain local autonomy has been suppressed. In 1930 the "Republican Commissariat of the People" for internal matters was transformed and its functions distributed among the Central Government organisms. In 1936, Pan-Unionist committees were created to deal with art questions and superior education, and these have absorbed a notable part of the attributions formerly allocated to the autonomous commissariats for education. Thus, even before 1936, sovietic legislation had more and more actively and clearly manifested a tendency to diminish the sphere of "national autonomy."

2 It is curious to note how the policy of the U.S.S.R. in regard to nationalities is evolving in conformity with the directives launched by the Central Committee of the Party. For a long time now this central organ has sought to create everywhere a proletarian culture which shall be uniformly international in character, but diversely national in form. The national form presumes, above all, the utilization of the particular language of each of the nationalities inhabiting the sovietic Union. This principle has been firmly applied throughout the whole of Russian territory, and, as at present, school-teaching is as much as possible given in the local national tongue. (So far as backward nationalities are concerned, this rule is applied only in the elementary schools.) The use of such language is obligatory in the local State administrations. It is employed for books and newspapers (after special alphabets have been created, in the case of nationalities which did not possess one), and also in the theatres. Owing, however, to the fact that administration is very strongly centralized, the character of all that is seen on the stage, printed in books, published in newspapers, taught in the schools, is imposed by Moscow.

Two epochs can be distinguished in the policy of the Communist Party in regard to nationalities. In the first, which ended in 1932, nationalist differentiation was enforced. In the Ukraine, in particular, efforts were made in different directions to accelerate the creation of a literary language, which should be as much as possible distinct from the Great Russian tongue. A veritable oppression of Russian minorities took place at that period in the national republics. Since 1933 national differentiation was no longer pressed, but discouraged. In the Ukraine, the Communist Government "purged" the Academy of Science and the Shevtchenko Society, where Ukrainophil extremists had control. Orders were given for the revision of the Academy's *Dictionary*, with the object of bringing the Ukrainian language more into line with Russian. This change of tendency was marked by a symptomatic event. In July 1933 the Ukranian Commissar for Education, Skrypnik, committed suicide. He had devoted himself zealously to an accelerated

Originality of U.S.S.R. Structure before the 1936 Constitution

From its creation, and down to the adoption of the Constitutions of 1936, the originality of the system of administration of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics consisted, primarily, in the fact that it was based entirely from bottom to top on the principle of the higher organs being elected by the lower ones; secondarily, in that the principle of the separation of powers—legislative, judicial, and executive[1]—was rejected entirely as mere bourgeois prejudice, arising logically from the class structure of bourgeois society; and, lastly, in that no definite line of demarcation was drawn between the powers of the central administration or its agents and those of local autonomous bodies.

All the State institutions were derived from its lowest organs—from those which were in immediate contact with the masses of the

Ukranization campaign, and for this he had been dismissed. In February 1933, shortly before his death, three district secretaries of the Communist Party in the Ukraine (out of a total of seven) had been removed from their posts, manifestly with the object of facilitating the application of the new policy.

Information as to the change in policy in regard to nationalities is also available from White Russia and the republics in Central Asia. The Soviet Government has not yet suppressed the use of local idioms in daily life and in the schools, but it has ceased to press the various nationalities in the Union towards "cultural self-determination," and it is now at the same time reducing the powers of the self-governing organisms of the national republics.

In the course of 1937 and 1938 a number of important people in the administration of the Republics of White Russia and of the Ukraine, in those of the Caucasus and of Central Asia were executed for "treason." In this must apparently be seen the confirmation that the methods of the Communist Government have led to the development of separatist movements on the whole periphery of the country.

1 Prior to the Stalin Constitution of 1936, the notion of separation of powers had always been entirely foreign to the Soviet régime. The Soviet jurist, Stuchka, in his *Doctrine of the State*, lays down that all the organs of the sovietic State represent one single class, that of the "workers." The distribution of functions is consequently a simple question of practical convenience. From this point of view, he says, the superior organs should fulfil simultaneously the legislative, executive, and judicial functions, or in any case the first two.

The constitution of the Union of July 6, 1923, embodied these principles. By virtue of Article 17, the Pan-Unionist Central Executive Committee issued not only codes and decrees, but also administrative ordinances, and centralized all the administration of the U.S.S.R. Under Article 37, the Council of Commissars of the People of the Union was "an organ of execution and management"; but, by virtue of Article 38, it also promulgated decrees and ordinances effective throughout the whole of the U.S.S.R. The judicial functions were considered merely as one of the aspects of general administration. This was explicitly laid down by the Commissar of Justice in the Ukraine, Skrypnik, in the *Weekly Bulletin of Sovietic Justice*, 1924, No. 44.

population. These institutions—the Soviets of the towns and villages—were constituted by popular election. The right to vote was accorded to all "workers"—that is, to the workmen and the peasants (excepting those who employed wage-earners for farm work and who were called *kulaks*)—and also to employees working in Government offices, shops, etc. Voting powers were refused to non-workers and to individuals "deprived of rights." To the latter category belonged the *kulaks*, the tradesmen and the clergy.

The town and the village Soviets, thus elected, sent delegates to the congress of the Soviets for the district (*rayon*) to which such towns or villages belonged. The district Soviet, in its turn, elected the delegates to the congress of Soviets for the province (*oblast*). The latter again elected the delegates forming the congress of Soviets for each separate republic. Each republican congress of Soviets was the highest representative assembly of its own republic. Finally, the congress of each of the republics ranking among the components of the Union designated[1] its delegate to the Pan-Unionist Congress of Soviets, which incarnated the will of all the "workers" of the U.S.S.R., as declared in the written Constitution.

Each of these superposed assemblies elected its own executive organ. The village Soviet elected its president, the town Soviet its Praesidium. The congresses of Soviets of the districts, the provinces, the republics, and the Union, each elected its executive committee, which called itself a "central" when it concerned a republic or the Union. In the districts and in the provinces the executive committee designated its Praesidium. The Central Executive Committee of the Republic and of the Union each nominated, from among its members, its own Council of Commissars of the People (whose collective name is abbreviated into *Sovnarkom*), which is closely equivalent to the "ministry" or "cabinet" of most other countries.

All this sovietic system of superposition (or of "ascendant structure," as it is often called) was characterized by the fact that each of its stages seemed to be an independent and autonomous entity. Each entity—small, medium, or great—had its own representative assembly in the form of a Soviet or of a congress of Soviets, which, according to the letter of the Constitution, expressed the will of the electors, and which itself designed or controlled its executive organs. But as the Soviets met very rarely, the actual direction of local affairs, like that of the general affairs of the State, remained in the

1 In the largest republics this duty fell on the provincial congresses of Soviets.

hands of the executive organs. The congress of Soviets of the different sovietic republics and of the U.S.S.R., for instance, were for a long time convoked only once every four years, and the whole of the current legislation was the work of the executive committees, when it was not carried into effect by simple decisions adopted by the Praesidiums or by the Councils of the Commissars of the People.

The "Supreme Council" under the 1936 Constitution

Although the new Stalin Constitution maintained many details of the organization of the State which were previously in vigour, it nevertheless brought about many modifications in the sovietic structure. The congresses of Soviets were suppressed in all their degrees and replaced by entirely new institutions directly elected by universal suffrage. The highest representative assembly of the great federal body, the U.S.S.R., was henceforth the "Supreme Council of the Union." In each republic the same change was effected and a Supreme Council installed.[1]

So far as the Union is concerned, the Supreme Council is composed of two chambers: the "Council of the Union" and the "Council of Nationalities." Contrary to the mode of election practised formerly, the members of the Council of the Union are elected on a system of direct suffrage by all the citizens of the U.S.S.R., on the basis of one deputy per 300,000 inhabitants. The members of the Council of Nationalities are also elected directly by the population, each of the eleven Union Republics nominating twenty-five deputies, each of the twenty-two Autonomous Republics eleven, each of the nine autonomous provinces five, and each national circuit (*okrug*) one deputy. The supreme organs of the various republics and of the other constituent parts of the U.S.S.R. are elected in the same way, by direct suffrage.[2]

The two assemblies—the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities—are equal in rights. They meet in one assembly for the election of the Praesidium of the Supreme Council, and for that of the Council of Commissars of the People (*Sovnarkom*). The Supreme Council holds two sessions a year.

1 Between January 21 and March 26, 1931, the Constitutions of all the Republics of the Union were recast, to bring them into harmony with the new Stalin Constitution. According to the new Constitutions of the Union and of the Union Republics, constitutional amendments require two-thirds of the votes of the respective Supreme Council.

2 Delegates of all the elected bodies are revocable at any moment and without distinction, by a majority of their electors.

The Praesidium or permanent committee is not only the nerve centre of the Supreme Council but also, in reality, the highest governing instrument in the U.S.S.R. It is composed of the president, of eleven vice-presidents, a secretary, and twenty-four members. The sovietic professor, Trainin, describes as follows, in the *Pravda*, the role reserved to the Praesidium by the Stalin Constitution: "The functions which Article 49 . . confer upon the Praesidium of the Supreme Council are more or less similar to those attributed in bourgeois States to the 'Chief of State,' i.e., to the King or President." Trainin stresses, at the same time, the fact that the Praesidium of the Supreme Council has no right to refuse or to delay the promulgation of laws; this in his opinion guarantees the preponderance in the U.S.S.R. of the legislative power over the executive.[1] But the retort to Trainin may well be that—first of all—the right of veto has long since disappeared in most bourgeois countries, and not only in republican but also in monarchical States. Secondly, the Stalin Constitution accords to the Praesidium of the Supreme Council a right which in practice may have a much greater import than that of the right of veto: "The Praesidium," Article 49, clause (*b*), lays down, "shall interpret the laws by means of decrees."

Legislative Power in 1936 Constitution

The new Constitution attempts, furthermore, to bring about essential modifications in the distribution of functions among the superior organs of the State. Ostensibly it rejects the confusion of legislative, executive and judicial powers which had theretofore been mingled in the Soviet régime. It lays down that legislative power in the U.S.S.R. belongs exclusively to the Supreme Council.[2] In the enumeration of the functions of the Praesidium of the Supreme Council, and those of the Council of Commissars of the People of the Union, the new Constitution carefully omits all mention of the legislative functions of these organs.

The principle of the separation of powers is by no means sufficiently safeguarded. The Stalin Constitution, in fact, as has already been stated, entrusts to the Praesidium of the Supreme Council—

1 *Pravda*, June 22, 1936.

2 In the Union Republics and in the Autonomous Republics the legislative power belongs in its turn to their respective Supreme Councils, each of which elects its own Praesidium.

which is by its functions the highest administrative organ—the power of interpreting the laws. This mainly consists in examining, possibly annulling, or otherwise modifying, decisions and ordinances of the Council of People's Commissars which are alleged not to be in conformity with the law. Such power should normally be in the hands of judicial organs, either ordinary courts (as in Great Britain and the United States) or special interpreting courts (as those of "administrative justice" in France). The Praesidium, in acting as interpreter of the law, will fill the roles of both judge and party. Further, the assumption of such power by the Praesidium would be equivalent to usurpation of the rights of the Supreme Council and to elevating the former into a *de facto* legislative body. It is manifest that these provisions conflict with the fundamental principle that a law cannot be annulled except by another law. It is not likely, therefore, that legality under the Stalin Constitution will have any other lot than to figure as a more or less deceitful fiction.

The New People's Commissariats

Under the new Constitution, the Council of the Commissars of the People of the Union is composed of the president, vice-presidents, the Pan-Unionist Commissars of the People, and those for the Union Republics, as well as the presidents of the commissions ranking equally with the commissariats.

In comparison with the state of affairs before 1936, the new Constitution has appreciably restricted the autonomy of the local executive power by the creation at Moscow of new Central Commissariats. It transferred to new "Commissariats for the Union Republics" the supervision of justice and public health which, in the Constitution of 1923, were under the exclusive control of each of the republics. Moreover, the Constitution of 1936 instituted a new "Pan-Unionist" Commissariat of the People for national defence industries. Apparently the creation of a Central Commissariat for Education is also contemplated. At any rate, this question has been pushed to the front in the sovietic Press.

Local Autonomy

In principle, the Soviet régime recognizes a very large measure of local autonomy. This again is reduced, in current practice, to a simple fiction, owing to the overlapping of the various superposed

administrative organs, between whose various spheres of competence no clear line of demarcation exists.

The regulations governing village Soviets (dated October 16, 1924, and January 1, 1931) and town Soviets (dated October 24, 1925, and January 20, 1933) conferred very wide and varied powers on these institutions, and on their executive organs (praesidiums and, in some cases, executive committees). The enumeration of the various services incumbent on the village and town Soviets fills several pages.[1] Now, the immediate superior authority over the village or town Soviet, which would be that of the district, as well as the still higher authority of the province, were respectively responsible for furnishing the same numerous services in each village and town of their respective areas, as shown by the district and provincial regulations issued at various dates in 1928 and 1929. Had the list of obligations incumbent on the authorities of a given village or town been imposed exclusively on them, neither the Central Government nor any of the intermediary bodies would have had anything to do for that particular village or town except in respect of foreign relations and national defence.

According to Soviet legislation, however, any State organization of higher grade can substitute itself for the organ immediately below it, and deal as it thinks fit with any matter for which the lower organ is primarily, although not exclusively, responsible. In fact, no legal text exists which stipulates that such and such matters must be solely dealt with by the village or urban Soviet. Thus, for instance, these Soviets busy themselves with local public service undertakings, but the district and provincial organs also deal with them. In each Union Republic and in each Autonomous Republic, moreover, there exists a department which is responsible for the conduct of all public service undertakings on its territory, whereas these

1 The list deals with the relations between the State and the Church; the fight against calamities due to the elements and against crime; registration of births, marriages, and deaths; the preservation of records; the organization of the law courts; the imposition of local taxation; the floating of loans; the exploitation of local public service undertakings; the development of trade and industry, transports, agricultural betterments, supervision of the application of labour laws; the fight against unemployment; sanitation in factories; social insurance; the organization of medical assistance; measures against contagious diseases; organization of sanitary inspection; protection of maternity and children; aid for the aged and invalids; installation and maintenance of elementary and special schools; assistance of deserted children; protection of ancient monuments and works of art; billeting of troops; protection of national minorities.

appear from the regulations just mentioned to depend primarily upon the local Soviets.

The superior administrative organs not only have the sole right to object to the election or the nomination of a functionary, but to compel his revocation. They can, in no matter what circumstances, draw up obligatory regulations for the lower administrative organs and give them such other orders as they think fit. There is, in short, no sphere of action in which the inferior organs can make their independence effective. Thus, for instance, the urban board of education nominates and removes the teachers in the municipal school under its control; but there is nothing to prevent its hierarchically superior body—that for the districts or for the province—from dismissing the teacher appointed by the urban board and replacing him by another of its own choice. Such an act would not amount to an abuse of power, but would be perfectly in accord with the law. The effect is that the local executive organs find themselves under a "double subordination." Mandatories who are revocable at any moment, they are in principle permanently under the control of the elective assembly of which they are the emanation, but in fact they are subordinated, in all their acts, to hierarchically superior executive organs.

In these circumstances, it is impossible to speak of local autonomy in the sovietic State. What is designated by this term is merely a deceptive semblance of administrative decentralization. In other words, every local government matter is assumed to be a function of the Central Government; but as it is materially impossible for the latter to assume the burden of them all, a vast proportion of its duties are delegated to various executive committees, or to sections of these, which, by the play of the system of "double subordination," become so many local agents of the Central Government. This delegation of powers is a simple state of fact. The Central Government entrusts to the secondary organs, and to those of a still inferior degree, as many matters as it can pass on to them, in each particular case in proportion to their ability, knowledge, and political trustworthiness; but it reserves the right to substitute itself for them at any moment and in every circumstance.

Thus, there are no real local authorities throughout the Soviet State. On the contrary, it is a State in which centralization has been pushed to its extreme logical limits. From this point of view, the Constitution of 1936 has brought nothing new. All it does is

change the method of composing local assemblies of provinces, districts (*rayons*), towns, and villages, which henceforth are elected in the same way as the Supreme Councils, that is by direct suffrage of all voters residing in the respective territories. These assemblies are henceforth no longer called "Soviets of Workmen's and Peasants' Deputies," but "Soviets of Workers' Deputies." On the other hand, the executive organs of these local assemblies retain, as before, the title of "Executive Committee."

The Cheka and its Successors

Among the Soviet institutions, a place apart must be given to the special "Commissions" and "Directions" which are the instruments of the Bolsheviks for the suppression of the real or imaginary enemies of the régime. These political police organizations, as much by their general character as by their complete lack of the slightest legal guarantees, have nothing of a judiciary nature, although they fill certain judicial functions.

Shortly after the November Revolution, Lenin deemed it necessary to centralize and, at the same time to systematize, to a certain extent, the fight against the "counter-revolution." The Council of Commissars of the People, upon his proposal, on December 20, 1917, created the "Pan-Russian Special Commission for the Fight against Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation"—the "Vecheka," or as it soon became commonly known, the dreaded *Cheka*. The statutes of the special commission did not endow it with any special judicial functions, but merely gave it the right to bring alleged delinquents before the revolutionary tribunal.

With the semi-official authorization of Lenin, however, Dzerzhinsky, the first President of the Commission, soon assumed the position of judge of his prisoners, and even went to the extent of carrying into execution the sentences pronounced by the Commission. The latter thus became the principal and the most terrible instrument of the Bolshevik terror. Moreover, the right to exercise the "Red Terror" was soon officially bestowed on it.[1]

1 The decision on the "Red Terror" was taken by the Council of Commissars of the People on September 3, 1918. "The present situation," it said, "renders necessary the use of terror for the immediate protection of the rear. . . . It is indispensable that the Republic shall be defended against its class enemies, who will be confined in concentration camps. . . . Whoever shall entertain relations with the White Guard organizations, or take part in a plot or insurrection, will be shot. The carrying out of all these measures has been entrusted by the Council of Commissars of the People to the Vecheka and the Chekas." (*Bulletin of Laws*, 1918, No. 65.)

Subordinated to the Pan-Russian Special Commission, special commissions (*Chekas*) were created in all the towns, at the railway stations, on the rivers and canals, in the regions af the front, etc. The "Vecheka" and the *Chekas* had at their disposal troops of all arms, which enjoyed better pay and rations than ordinary military bodies.

The Special Commissions and their President, Dzerzhinsky, very speedily gained a terrible world-wide celebrity. When Lenin, disappointed at not being able to bring about Socialism immediately in Russia, aspired to enter into relations with Europe, he thought it advisable to suppress the "Vecheka" and the *Chekas*, whose reputation had become too infamous.

In order to continue the fight against the counter-revolutionaries, he created, on February 6, 1922, the "Political Direction of the State" (*Guepeu*), but some time afterwards (November 15, 1923) this name was retained only for the local organizations, while the central organism became officially the "Unified Political Direction of the U.S.S.R." (*Oguepeu*).[1]

In substance, however, this change amounted only to a simple replacement of one name by another. The *Oguepeu* did exactly the same things as the "Vecheka" had done. It soon earned all over the world a reputation in no way less deplorable, and this brought it the same fate. In 1934, when Stalin adopted a new foreign policy, and sought a *rapprochement* with "the capitalist States," the *Guepeu* was suppressed, and the "protection of revolutionary order and the security of the State" was entrusted to the "Pan-Unionist Commissariat for the Interior."[2] In the precise tenor of the decree of 1934, the Direction-General of the Security of the State (*Gugobez*), which had replaced the *Oguepeu*, was deprived of the right of judging and executing accused persons. In fact, under existing conditions in the Soviet State, these ameliorations have remained a dead letter. After the murder of Kirov, December 1, 1934, the General Direction of State Security caused a very large number of people, who were accused of being implicated in this crime, to be shot without any form of trial. The Constitution of 1936 in no way affected the rights or the functions of the *Guepeu*.

In addition to protecting the régime, the political police organization is frequently employed as contractor and entrusted with the

1 *Izvestia* of November 17, 1923. *Bulletin of Laws*, 1923, No. 81.
2 *Pravda*, December 2, 1934.

carrying out of public works. Gigantic undertakings—such as the Dneprostroi hydro-electric plant, the White Sea canal, and the Volga-Moscow canal—were carried out under the immediate authority of the *Guepeu* and the *Gugobez*. About 400,000 men were employed solely on the construction of the White Sea–Baltic canal. Of this number nearly 300,000 were political prisoners, who had to submit, under atrocious conditions, to forced labour, ostensibly with a view to their "reformation." Death made terrible ravages among them, but the number of those who perished has of course been kept secret. Of all the institutions of the U.S.S.R. the State police have adapted themselves the most whole-heartedly to the wishes of the Bolshevik Government, and have even never recoiled from making hundreds of thousands of victims.

In handing over to these special bodies of police all matters appertaining to the "security of the State"; in conferring upon them frightful powers of summary action; and in delivering to their unlimited and pitiless exploitation vast crowds of political adversaries, the U.S.S.R. has cut itself off from modern constitutional States.

Justice

In sovietic Russia justice is within the competence of the Union Republics. Each of these possesses its own Commissar of the People or Minister for Justice. The Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. alone—which deals with the great political and military crimes—is, as a tribunal, common to the whole Union. For some time past, however, the tendency towards centralization, which has manifested itself visibly in the various domains of public life, has begun to extend to that of justice also. A decree dated July 20, 1936, instituted a Union Commissary for Justice. By the same decree, all the public prosecutors and investigating magistrates of the Union Republics and the Autonomous Republics were subordinated to the Public Prosecutor of the U.S.S.R.

The judicial machinery of these republics is practically identical. The statutes of the administration of justice drawn up by and applied in the R.S.F.S.R. from October 31, 1922 (re-issued on November 19, 1926, and since completed by numerous special decrees) have been adopted by the other Union Republics (except for trivial modifications of detail).

Prior to the constitutional reform of 1936, the courts were placed officially under the direct control of the executive organs, superior or secondary. The "Judges of the People," whose jurisdiction, in the tribunals of first instance, extends to the enormous majority of civil and criminal affairs, were elected for a year, by the urban Soviets or by the executive committees of the districts (or *rayons*). Upon the expiration of their first year, they were made eligible for a second year's service, and so on afterwards. On the other hand, they could be dismissed from office at a moment's notice, for disciplinary reasons, on the initiative of the public prosecutor, or of the president of the immediately superior court, and by decision of one of the special disciplinary colleges attached to the provincial or regional courts. The members of these provincial and regional courts (tribunals of second instance, as a general rule, but also sitting in first instance for certain cases exceptionally referred to their jurisdiction), were appointed for one year by the provincial and regional executive committees, subject to ratification by the Commissariat of the People for Justice. They could be revoked before the expiration of their term, not only by disciplinary measures, but merely by decision of the organs by which they had been appointed. The members of the Supreme Courts of each of the republics and of the Union were nominated and dismissed by the Praesidium of the respective central executive committees.[1] Sovietic judges had no guarantee that they would not be dismissed, in the event of their judgments not being in accord with the wishes of the Government.[2]

The Constitution of 1936 provides for some amendments to the judicial machinery. Certain of them are purely a matter of form, and result mainly from the supplanting of old State institutions by new ones. The magistrates, including members of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., are no longer appointed by executive committees, but by the newly created representative assemblies of the degree corresponding to their jurisdiction. The "Judges of the People" are the only exception to this rule. They are now elected "by the citizens of the districts, by universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage." Lastly, the duration of the appointment is three

1 *Code of Judicial Administration*, November 19, 1926, Articles 177 and 178. See Ibid., Articles 16 and 46.

2 In all the sovietic courts actions were heard—and still are under Article 193 of the 1936 Constitution—before a popular jury, with the exception of cases expressly provided for by law.

years for Judges of the People, and up to five years for all the superior judges.

The Stalin Constitution certainly proclaims the principle of the independence of the judges, and their subordination to the law alone (Article 112), but as it is still silent on the principle of the immovability of the magistrates, this independence is entirely illusory. It is, moreover, strongly menaced by Article 104, which instructs the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.—in very general terms—to "watch over the judicial action of all the organs of justice of the U.S.S.R. and of the Union Republics."

From all other points of view, the new Constitution scarcely changes the previous state of affairs, and sovietic justice still remains in many respects fundamentally different from Russian justice before the Revolution, and from European justice in general.[1]

Let us note, first of all, that the sovietic courts are not composed of persons who have had legal training. According to the statutes of judicial organization, it is sufficient for a candidate for a post of People's Judge merely to have passed through "two years responsible political functions in the institutions of the State, in workmen's and peasants' social or professional organizations, or in the Party itself." The Soviet newspapers, from time to time, publish astounding statements as to the intellectual level of the judges. The *Izvestia* of May 9, 1936, for instance, states that down to January 1st of that year only five per cent of the sovietic judges had completed a course at the Higher School of Law, or at least the simplified course of instruction known as the "higher course of justice," the programme of which is so summary that it cannot be considered to rank as a university course.

On the other hand, the staffs of the courts are filled with members of the Communist Party. These hold the whole of the posts in the Supreme Courts of the republics, and man more than 80 per cent of the provincial and regional tribunals. The nominations to judicial functions are, therefore, based much more on the political trustworthiness of the candidates than on their professional aptitude.

By its organization and by its procedure, Soviet justice offers very

1 According to the new Constitution, and by virtue of the decree of July 20, 1936, all sections of the Public Prosecutor's Department, without exception, are solely under the jurisdiction of "the Public Prosecutor of the U.S.S.R." (who also is the Attorney-General), by whom they are appointed, or at least ratified. These regulations, in their turn, confirm the tendency towards centralization, which characterizes the 1936 Constitution, as compared with its predecessor of 1923.

little protection to the accused. All the Soviet codes include articles which authorize the courts to pronounce verdicts based less on the law than on "revolutionary expediency." Thus, the first Article of the Civil Code of November 11, 1922, explicitly stipulates that civic rights are not protected when they are used contrary to their social and economic *raison d'être*. Article 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure of July 10, 1923, states that, in the event of the law being silent on a given point, the judgment of a tribunal shall be based "on the general policy of the Workers' and Peasants' Government." Article 16 of the Code of Criminal Justice of November 22, 1926, authorizes the application, by analogy, of the articles of the said Code to acts which are not explicitly mentioned in it, when they constitute a social danger. It was by virtue of this disposition that, in the period from 1928 to 1930, peasants were judged and imprisoned who had refused to deliver their grain to the revenue officials. In their cases the courts applied Article 107 of the Code, under which persons were convicted who had deliberately held back their stocks in order to cause a fraudulent increase in selling prices.

It is particularly curious to note that, in criminal procedure, the guarantees enjoyed by accused persons are reduced more in important cases than in those which are less serious. The Code of Civil Procedure of February 15, 1923, for example, recognized in the superior courts the right of stopping the questioning of a witness, or of the whole of them, at no matter what moment, if the tribunal considered that the depositions of the witnesses already heard had sufficiently established a given circumstance. In the same category of courts, the tribunal has the right to decide that there is no ground for re-hearing the parties, if they consider that the facts have been sufficiently brought out by the investigating magistrate. On the other hand, the Judges of the People, as courts of first instance, have no right to make use of this simplified procedure.

It is to be observed that there is a tendency to reduce more and more, in the more important cases, the guarantees protecting the accused. Under the decree of December 1, 1934, in counter-revolutionary trials, where the accused are liable to the death penalty, the accused parties do not take part in the proceedings. In other words, neither the accused nor his advocate are present in court. This procedure amounts merely to the adoption of the reports upon the examining magistrate's inquiry as conclusive proof of guilt.

A particularly striking confirmation of these methods was given by the conditions under which took place the trial, at the end of August 1936, of the sixteen well-known Bolsheviks, headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, who were accused of having organized terrorist groups in the territory of the U.S.S.R. with the intention of assassinating "the leaders of the Pan-Unionist Communist Party and those of the Sovietic Government." Down to the end of the trial, which terminated with the sentence of death upon the whole of the accused, the fact which served as a starting-point for the proceedings was never mentioned. The indictment, when it did not reproduce the declarations of the accused, who had denounced themselves, merely stated that "the police investigation had established" such and such facts. In the course of the trial the Public Prosecutor produced no document establishing the guilt of the accused, nor did he call any witnesses against them. On the other hand, during several days, the court echoed ceaselessly with the speeches of the accused in denunciation of themselves, after having refused the assistance of counsel. They were not satisfied with confirming on all points the whole of the accusations brought against them. They went so far as to declare that their acts had not been dictated by ideological motives of any kind, but exclusively "by hatred of the leaders of the Party and of the country, and by the thirst for power, to which they had formerly been very near" (according to Kamenev's declaration). The accused men themselves stated that the methods of their struggle were entirely in line with their "monstrously criminal designs," and were "as base and as vile as the object itself which we had set before us." "Our actions," Zinoviev asserted, "clearly show the entire absence of any principle or guiding thought which led us to fight, in crude and unprincipled fashion, for the mere conquest of power."[1] And the accused men concluded by insisting that the death penalty should be inflicted upon them.

It would be vain to seek, in the extremely long reports of the trial published daily by the leading Soviet newspapers—*Pravda* and *Izvestia*—the real key to the enigma presented by the tenor of the indictment and by the whole attitude of the accused men. It is probable that the chiefs of the political police of the U.S.S.R.—those universal legatees of the too famous *Chekas* and *Guepeus*, and of their traditions—would alone be able to furnish the solution to

1 *Pravda*, August 21, 1936.

the poignant mystery with which the trial was enveloped. There is every reason to believe that the trial itself was only a screen behind which the all-powerful Soviet leaders took shelter, in order to perpetrate an odiously arbitrary act.

A similar atmosphere has pervaded all the other great Moscow trials of high sovietic officials in 1937 and 1938. The surprising phenomenon of astounding open confessions in court has been a feature of practically all these trials, and appears to have become an invariable mode of procedure in such cases. The very phrasing of these "confessions"—as quoted above—suggests that the accused must have been subjected to some kind of physical or moral treatment appropriate to the end desired.

The extent to which the Party interferes directly with the course of justice is—obviously quite unwittingly—revealed in an article which appeared in the first number for 1938 of the Moscow review, *Soviet Justice*. The article takes the form of an attack on the recently disgraced Commissar of Justice Krylenko. It states that under his administration it was a common practice for the various Communist Party committees to summon the judges and prosecuting officials to their meetings and give them orders concerning the decisions they must adopt as to who should be acquitted, who should be found guilty, and what sentence should be inflicted. The juries—in such cases—were led to obediently return the verdicts desired, and no one would take the risk of protesting against such illegal interference. The fact that Krylenko is now suddenly blamed for having for years tolerated such malpractice can, of course, not be taken as indicating a sincere intention of those in power to cease intervening in the course of justice.

The picture of Soviet justice would be incomplete if mention were not made of the revolutionary courts-martial with their quick action and freedom from any strict rules of procedure. From their creation in 1918, these courts played an important part in political repression and inflicted numerous capital penalties. In the beginning their decisions were not even recorded, and it is not possible to-day to establish the number of death sentences then passed by them. The High Military Tribunal was eventually placed under the control of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. It has, in later years, again assumed the almost exclusive character of a revolutionary court, especially since the summer of 1936, when the officers of the Commissariat for Internal Affairs, under the direction of Iezhov,

endeavoured to root out and destroy the counter-revolutionary cells of the "Trotzkyist-Bukharinist agents of Fascism."[1]

From Democracy to Bureaucracy

Theoretically, the Soviet State represents in structure a free federation of autonomous republics. It is ostensibly based upon an absolute application of democratic principles, such as has never been seen before. The masses participate in all grades of the administration and of legislation from the lowest to the highest, and all the executive and judicial organs are appointed by election. And yet, if everything be taken into consideration, we are obliged to conclude that, since its foundation and throughout its whole existence, the Soviet State has been unceasingly under the influence of numerous factors which have transformed what might have been a free democratic federation into a centralized and bureaucratic State.

The Unwritten Constitution

In fact, all the organisms of State in the U.S.S.R. are subordinated to a single centre, but this centre must not be sought among any of the institutions provided for by the Constitution. It consists, in fact, of the small group at the head of the Communist Party.

The Official Doctrine of the State

The official view as to the veritable nature of the Soviet political régime has been very clearly expressed in a formula which figures in the *Guide Book to the Soviet Union*, published by the Soviet Government in 1928: "The undisguised and deliberate use of State institutions as an instrument in the class struggle is fully in accord with the Marxian doctrine of the State, namely, that it is a class organization. In this case it is the organization of the ruling proletarian class. This conception of the State permeates all the forms of social and economic life in the Union." The same official doctrine affirms that, as long as society shall not have been completely reorganized on the bases of Socialism, the proletariat must be the ruling factor, and its advance guard, the Communist Party, must exercise dictatorship in its name. The Constitution of 1936 rests on the same foundation.

In laying the draft of his Constitution before the VIIIth Pan-

1 Article of Ulrich in *Soviet Justice*, 1938, No. 4.

Unionist Congress of Soviets, Stalin declared: "I must recognize that the project of the new Constitution definitely conserves the existing régime of the dictatorship of the working class, as it maintains without change the present guiding role of the Communist Party."[1] In these conditions, to comprehend the governmental mechanism of the U.S.S.R., it is necessary to know the organization and the statutes of the Party.

Organization of the Communist Party

The Bolshevik Party adopted the official name of "Communist" in virtue of a decision of its VIIth Congress (March 6 to 8, 1918).[2] Re-cast in 1934,[3] the statutes of the Communist Party may be said to form the second written Constitution of the country. According to these statutes, the machinery of the Party, like that of the Soviets, is based on the same principle of delegation—always from the lower to the higher. In each institution, in each undertaking, in each school, in each military unit, where there exits several Communists, a "primary organization" is created. This basic unit convokes its members to meetings (which may be public or private). At its first meeting it elects its officers, who form what is known in Russia (and most other continental countries) as the "bureau," in which the secretary plays the principal part. In due course the unit will elect its delegates to the Party conference for the district or for the town.[4] As a general rule these conferences—like all Party conferences of the higher grades also—now meet only once in every four years. The district conference elects its committee, whose members in their turn elect the officers who are to form the bureau (including the secretary). This committee, and not the conference, sends delegates to the Pan-Unionist Congress of the Communist Party. The latter corresponds to the Pan-Unionist Congress of the Soviets.

1 *Pravda*, November 26, 1936.

2 In carrying out the desire expressed by Lenin, a short time after his return to Russia, the VIIth Congress decided "to give henceforward to our Party—the Social Democrat Party of the Russian Bolsheviks—the appellation of the Russian Communist Party, with (between parentheses) the addition: 'Bolsheviks' (R.C.P.B.). The XIVth Congress (December 18 to 31, 1925) brought a new modification to the name of the Party, which has since then officially become: 'Pan-Unionist Communist Party of Bolsheviks.' "

3 *Pravda*, February 9, 1934.

4 According to the statutes of the Party, a congress in order to be regularly constituted and able to register valid votes "must comprise representatives of organizations of the party totalling more than half the number present." "This quorum is not insisted on for conferences." (Administrative statutes adopted by the IInd Congress of the Party in 1903.)

The Pan-Unionist Congress of the Party elects, from among its members, the Central Committee—at present composed of 71 members[1]—and the Commission of Control. The latter has the duty of keeping watch over the political orthodoxy of the members.[2]

The Central Committee plays, in the machinery of the Party, a role almost analogous to that of the Central Executive Committee in the organization of the Soviets. To some extent it takes the place of the Party Congress in the intervals between the sittings of the Congresses, which during the last ten years have taken place only every three or four years. The Central Committee of the Party designs its own executive bodies.

The Executive Organs of the Party

These executive organs of the Party are: (1) the Political Bureau (*Politbureau*), (2) the Organization Bureau (*Orgbureau*), and (3) the Secretarial Bureau.

At one time the Political Bureau played such an important role that it was considered abroad as "the veritable Government of the U.S.S.R." It has now become merely a consultative office attached to "the Red Chief," a personage to whom no reference is made, either in the Constitution of the Soviet State or in that of the Party.

The Organization Bureau deals with the distribution of the Communists in all the posts of the State and of the Party, the system in operation being that every function, of however little importance, shall be filled by a member of this privileged body.

The Secretarial Bureau to-day is the lever which puts into movement the machinery of the Party. It is composed of a variable number of members (at present, five). Under the name of First Secretary (previously "General Secretary"), one of them stands out by far above all the others, and effectively rules the country. This is "The Leader" (the *Vozhd*).[3]

1 In addition, the Congress appoints sixty-eight candidates, or "substitute" members of the Central Committee.

2 A decision of the Central Committee of the Party, dated February 27, 1934, extends the prerogatives of the Commission of Control beyond the limits of the Party by giving it the right to keep under surveillance the political conformity of the employees of the Soviet State. (*Pravda*, February 28, 1934.)

3 The Russian word *Vozhd*—the "zh" being pronounced like "s" in the English word "measure"—is the exact equivalent of "Duce" and of "Fuehrer."

The Leader or "Vozhd"

"The Leader of the People"—who is also known as "The Leader of the World Proletariat"—exercises, in fact, absolute power in the fullest sense of the term. He is not bound by any law, even if he has signed it himself. Nor is he bound by the collective will of any electoral college. However high they may be, and whatever the number of their members, the assemblies which are convoked under the terms of the Constitution of the Sovietic State, or of the statutes of the Party, meet more for the purpose of registering the will of the Leader than for restricting his free will, whatever form it may take.

Neither is the "Red Leader" bound by the decisions of any court of justice of any kind (for there exists in the U.S.S.R. no real and independent tribunal) nor by the so-called "subjective public rights," which are regarded in the U.S.S.R. as mere "bourgeois prejudices." Lastly, his action is subject to no form of procedure whatever. He is as free to consult whatever person or body he thinks fit, as he is to take any decision without having conferred with anybody.

No regulations exist specifying the conditions which must be complied with to enable any candidate to assume the post of Red Leader. Precedents allow the conclusion to be drawn that a kind of tacit or unwritten law exists, under which the right to occupy the post is conferred on the most resolute man in the *entourage* of the previous leader. The method of appointing the new *Vozhd* is a mere question of fact: he will be the man who has emerged victorious from the fight for the succession.

Any search for a mention of this rule in the written texts will be a vain one. The practice is the result of a state of fact, which will continue as long as a given equilibrium between political forces shall last.

One-Man Administration System

By what means has *de facto* one-man rule succeeded in substituting itself for the oligarchic system laid down in the Constitution of the Communist Party, and for the "democracy of the workers" and the "workmen's and peasants' state" as the U.S.S.R. is described in Article 1 of the Constitution of 1936?

The organic structure of the Communist Party was based on the

play of two factors: on the one hand, the theoretical conceptions of the Bolsheviks, relative to the organization of their party, and on the other, the fact that, when the Party secured power it was dominated by Lenin, its one-man leader.

His successor, Stalin, has known, in his turn, how to maintain and consolidate the personal power acquired by Lenin. To this end, he placed all over the country trusted partisans in all the secretarial posts, by insuring their election to them, and by filling all the commissions of control with his own nominees.

In order to remain all-powerful, he had to remain "First Secretary" of the Party—which is his new official title—and to have at his side a docile Central Committee. As this committee is elected by the Pan-Unionist Congress of the Party, it was essential to secure a faithful majority in that assembly. Now, the Party Congress consists of delegates nominated ostensibly by the Party conferences, in each of the republics and provinces. As a matter of literal fact, they are really chosen by the secretaries of the Central Committees for the respective territorial divisions. These are merely so many creatures of Stalin, and can be relied on to send to the Congress exactly the men required. A similar system is applied, with the same success, at all the lower degree elections. Thus, perfect "harmony" is secured in the respective conferences of the Party in the republics, the provinces, and the districts.

The Masses of the Party

But how do the secretaries of the primary units proceed at the base in order to keep in hand the mass of the members and be able to ensure from the start "good elections" of delegates to the conferences of the districts?[1] In the first place, this mass has already been carefully sifted at the moment of their admission to membership of the Party, and subsequently trained by the so-called "Party education methods."

In the second place, the Party secretaries have at their disposal a powerful weapon, in the form of the threat of a "purging" operation; that is to say, the dismissal from the Party by the Commission of Control. The plenary sitting of the Central Committee of December 1935 went so far as to give the secretaries power to proceed

1 Speaking generally, the number of Party adherents is made known only on the occasion of the Conferences. As these become less and less frequent, information as to the numerical strength of the Party is issued only at longer and longer

personally to a purging operation, subject to ratification later by the bureaux of the District Committees.[1] As a result it is sufficient for the secretaries to propose, in the course of a plenary sitting of the primary organization, a list of candidates for delegates to the district conference, to secure the unanimity or quasi-unanimity of that assembly.[2]

intervals. The following are indications which have figured in the official shorthand reports of the Congresses:

Congress and Date	*Members*	*Candidates**
VIIIth, March 1919	312,000	—
IXth, March 1920	612,000	—
Xth, March 1921	733,000	—
XIth, March–April 1922	582,000	—
XIIth, April 1923	386,000	—
XIIIth, May 1924	362,000	369,000
XIVth, June 1925 ..	692,000	422,000
XVth, December 1927	887,000	349,000
XVIth, July 1930 ..	1,261,000	712,000
XVIIth, February 1934 ..	.. 1,872,000	935,000

* *Number not published before* 1924.

In December 1932, before the last Congress of the Party, the Central Committee ordered a "general purge" (*Pravda*, December 11, 1932); that is, a general close personal investigation into the political orthodoxy of each registered member, with a view to the exclusion of all doubtful and incapable ones. The admission of new members was, at the same time, suspended. In December 1935, the Central Committee of the Party (*Izvestia,* December 26, 1935) declared that the purging had been completed, and the recruitment of new members was authorized, as from June 1936. It is impossible to state the exact total membership to date, for no reliable information is obtainable as to the number of new members, or as to the number of deaths or resignations from the Party, in so far, of course, as voluntary resignations really occur. In his speech closing the plenary sitting of the Central Committee of the Party on March 5, 1937, Stalin stated that the number of members of the Party was then approximately two millions.

1 *Pravda,* December 26, 1935.

2 Until recently, elections to functions in the party organization were by public voting. Secret voting was introduced for the first time at the elections within the Party in May, June, and July 1937. The sifting of undesirable elements remained as efficacious as in the past. It is now assured mainly by "criticism" and "self-criticism," to which are publicly submitted not only candidates but those who propose them; without speaking of eliminations by the "purging" process, which is used against any of those who displease the leaders of the Party. Thus the *Pravda,* August 17, 1937, rejoiced that the whole of the machinery of the Party, from low to high, "will be solely equipped by men devoted to the death to the party of Lenin and Stalin." The new elections resulted, above all, in the rejuvenation of the Party *cadres.* Besides the party membership, there is the Union of Communist Youth or *Kamsomol,* which groups about 4,500,000 youths between the ages of 14 and 23, not counting 6,000,000 still younger boys and girls, called Pioneers. This organization is destined to imbue communist faith and discipline into the coming generation. These young people are also extensively trained in sports.

The State Machinery Subordinated to that of the Party

The *de facto* power exercised by the Party machinery on that of the State (that is to say, of the Soviets) was obtained in the following manner:

The local elections were conducted in such a way that the Soviets of the towns and the villages were composed of Communists, or of people who were little likely to protest against Communist direction. All the more or less independent voters were kept out. In the town Soviets the Communists have always and everywhere been in the majority. In the village Soviets this result could not be obtained, owing to the small number of Communists in the countryside, but the district congresses of Soviets were already composed of Communists and of minor functionaries of the sovietic administration. Voting being always public, these assemblies regularly sent to the higher bodies candidates designated by those in authority. The congresses of the Soviets for the Provinces, the Republics, and the Union, consequently consisted almost entirely of Soviet officials, mostly party members, and readily submissive to the will of the party centre.[1]

The preponderating influence of the Communist Party in the sovietic representative assemblies was thus ensured by the fact that the Communists there disposed of a solidly organized majority, which was obedient to the rigorous discipline of the Party.

A system of "Communist fractions"—prescribed by the Party statutes, and the name of which was subsequently modified into that of "Groups"—has been in operation ever since the VIIIth Party Congress in 1919. All Communists belonging to a given grade in the State administration form a distinct "group," which is directly subject to the authority of the corresponding party organization. (For example, the Communist group of a Provincial Executive Committee is subordinated to the local provincial organization of

1 The VIIIth Congress of Soviets—which adopted the Stalin Constitution, in place of the sovietic system in operation previously—was no exception to this rule. At the time of the VIIIth Congress, the Party's numerical strength had fallen off, largely as the result of the then recent "purgings." In the country at large, the Party represented an infinitesimal percentage of the population. Nevertheless, at the time of the acceptance of the new Constitution—proclaimed officially as "the most perfect," and even as "the most democratic"—the Communists were able to speak in the name of the whole country, since they commanded 72 per cent of the delegates, out of a total of 2,016. (Report of the President of the Commission for Verification of Mandates of the VIIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of Soviets. *Pravda*, December 2, 1936.)

the Party; the Communist groups in the representative assemblies for the Union to the Central Committee of the Party.) Whenever a more or less important question comes up officially before any council forming part of the State organization, the "group" receives instructions from the Party committee, and through the secretary as to the decision to be made. The rules of discipline compel all the members of the group to enforce it by unanimous vote. In their earlier editions, the statutes of the Party foreshadowed the possibility of dissensions between the "group" and the Committee and indicated the course to be followed with a view to their settlement. With the party discipline becoming more and more rigorous these provisions lost all point.

If the State machinery preserves still an appearance of individual existence, in reality it is the will of the Party—that of its Leader—which is carried out. When, for example, it is a question, in one of the Autonomous Republics, of appointing a Commissar of the People for Education, it is within the duty of the higher organ of the Republic to proceed to his election. Prior to the new Stalin Constitution, this duty devolved on the Central Executive Committee, and thenceforward on the Supreme Council. In reality, however, it is the centre—in this case, the Organization Bureau of the Party—which indicates the candidate for which the Communists belonging to the higher organ in question must vote, and vote effectively and without the least hesitation.

Whether they are elected or appointed to any post in the State service, the Communists are ceaselessly subordinated to the rigorous discipline of the Party. Subject as they are officially to such and such executive body of the State administration, they are none the less dependent, in fact, on the respective party organs, whose instructions dictate their line of action. Officially, a Commissar of Education for the Tartar Autonomous Republic, for instance, had not to know until the Stalin Constitution any other authority except that of the Tartar Central Executive Committee, and now has to recognize only the authority of the Council of Commissars of the same Republic. But, as a Communist, he had and has to obey the will alone of the higher organs of the Party sitting in Moscow.

The "non-Party" officials, who fill the lower local organs of the administration, have equally to submit to the will of the Party. The Communists, who have always been in unquestionable command at the top of the State machine, have taken advantage of this

situation to enact a whole series of laws deviating considerably from the fundamental principle which theoretically calls for the construction of the Soviet State system by rising from the base to the summit. It has thus been stipulated that the Praesidiums of the lower grade executive committees shall be subordinated to the Praesidiums of higher grade committees, and that the "sections" of the inferior Soviets shall be subordinated, in their turn, to the corresponding "sections" of the higher Soviets. ("Section" is the official designation of the local services of the various departments of the administration.) By these means the majority which the Communists command in the higher degrees of the State machinery enables them to regulate the attitude of its subordinate services.

The whole organization of the State has thus been made subject to the direction of the Party, whose action operates from above to below, and thus reaches the most insignificant local "non-Party" official. In this manner the "ascendant structure" of the State machinery has been emptied of its substance, while preserving its outward appearance intact.

The Communist fractions, which are now known as "groups," exist not only in the State organization, but also in the trade unions, in the co-operative organizations, and, in a general fashion, in all the societies and other organizations on the territory of the U.S.S.R. All these groups are subordinated to the higher organizations of the Communist Party, on the same basis as those which form part of the State machinery. The Communist Party "governs" in the U.S.S.R. thanks to this system of "nuclai." An expression used in Soviet Russia describes this essential instrument in the hands of the Party as a kind of transmission belt, which causes all the machinery to work, according to the will of the Leader.

The secretaries of the local committees, in fact, supervise these "fractions" or "groups," and thus become themselves the effective wielders of power in their respective areas. It is not the presidents of the provincial organs of the power of the State which are the real "Red Governors," but certainly the secretaries of the provincial committees of the Party.

The Constitution of 1936 recognized in law the predominance of the party machinery over that of the State, as it existed already in fact. The Party no longer contents itself with playing its part in the background, but intends henceforward to appear openly on the stage itself, and to function in every role in which the State figures.

The Soviet System Replaced by Façade Democracy

When an attempt is made to summarize the modifications of the Soviet system, due to the new Constitution, it is realized that the most important—and, at first sight, the most visible of them—has been the abandonment of the "ascendant system of Soviets," as it existed previously. Nothing has been retained, in fact, of the old State machinery so far as it was established on the principle of superposed councils delegated from the lower to the higher, the lower one alone being directly elected by primary assemblies of the workers. Under the new Constitution the Supreme Councils of the Union and of the different republics, as well as the local assemblies (henceforth called "Soviets of the Deputies of the Workers"), are now elected by the whole of the citizens of the U.S.S.R., without distinction of sex, provided they are at least eighteen years of age. Voting rights are now accorded even to the soldiers. The Stalin Constitution goes as far as to give the right to vote to the categories of persons who were formerly known as "deprived of right" (*lishentsi*), and who have now been brought back under the common law. Apart from lunatics, who are automatically excluded, the right to vote cannot now be taken away from anybody except by decisions of the courts. Finally, the new law institutes equal and secret suffrage.

The advantage which the town workers previously enjoyed, as compared with the peasants, in regard to Soviet elections, has thus been abolished. The sovietic régime formerly accorded to the rural population only one-fifth of the representation given to the urban workers. While the village Soviets sent to the district (*rayon*) congresses one delegate per 300 electors, the urban Soviets had one for every sixty electors. The same proportions existed for the congresses of the Soviets for the provinces, the republics, and, finally, for the Union. This inequality of representation arose from the fact that sovietic law formerly recognized that the urban proletariat were entitled to "a directing role in the administration of the country."[1] Since the peasants have been proletarized by collectivization, Stalin thought fit to accord them the same proportional number of delegates as the town workers.

1 *U.S.S.R. Handbook*, London, 1936, p. 16 (a work compiled by sovietic specialists).

The Communist Party Recognized as the Decisive Factor in the Constitution of 1936

It would be a serious mistake, however, to suppose that universal suffrage—direct, equal, and secret—was instituted, under the new Constitution, with the sincere desire to establish in the U.S.S.R. a real democracy. The reality is quite different. The articles in the Stalin Constitution which deal with the new electoral system scarcely aim at creating a representative régime responding to the will of the majority of the people. The Constitution of 1936 authorized the citizens to vote only for the candidates proposed by the Communist Party, or by certain organizations controlled by that body.[1] The Stalin Constitution attests with unquestionable clearness that all organizations officially recognized in the U.S.S.R. are subsidiaries of the Communist Party: consequently, any candidates they might nominate would be in reality candidates of the Party. Article 126 says: "The most active and the most conscious citizens, belonging to the working class or to other categories of workers, are associated in the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., which is the advance guard of the workers in their fight for the consolidation and development of the Socialist régime and the directing nucleus of all the social and State organizations of the workers." As a matter of fact, the sovietic electoral system has in no way increased the individual rights of the citizens of the U.S.S.R. The new Constitution, on the other hand, for the first time in the existence of the Soviet régime, officially legalized the rights of the Communist Party in the administration of the country.

Rights and Duties of Citizens According to the Stalin Constitution

"The fundamental rights and duties of the citizens," as proclaimed by the new Constitution, are, in effect, entirely devoid of all real value. The articles which govern them, however, have been carefully reproduced by the foreign Press. They have been established "in conformity with the interests of the workers, and with a view to consolidate the Socialist régime" and guarantee to the citizens of

1 As stated in Article 141:
"The right to nominate candidates is allowed only to social organizations and workers' associations; i.e. Communist Party organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, organizations for the youth, cultural societies."

the U.S.S.R. the free practice of religious worship and the liberty of anti-religious propaganda (Article 124); freedom of speech and of the Press, of reunions and of public meetings, processions and demonstrations in the streets (Article 125); the inviolability of the home and the secrecy of correspondence (Article 128). "The exercise of these civic liberties is guaranteed by placing at the disposal of the workers and their organizations the printing-offices, stocks of paper, the means of communications and necessary material factors, as well as the free use of public buildings and streets" (Article 125).

This list does not include a single word on the most elementary personal rights which are recognized in all the bourgeois States: the right of freedom of moving from place to place. Under the prevailing system of State-control of everything, which now exists in Russia, the mere mention of this right would be too strikingly discordant. Freedom of circulation and free choice of one's place of residence ceased long ago to exist in the U.S.S.R., even for members of the Communist Party. The assignment of everyone to a given domicile and place of labour was brought about by the workers not having shown very much ardour to participate in the carrying out of the industrialization and socialization of Russia. Since 1930, link by link, the fetters imposed on the "workers" have been forged.

The first decree, which attached all industrial workers to their factories or warehouses, was promulgated in 1930 and prohibited them from henceforward leaving their place of work, except by permission of the manager of the undertaking, the chairman of the trade union, and the secretary of the Communist "cell." A decree of January 1931 compelled all former railway workers, willingly or by force, to return to their posts. In November 1932 a further decree ordered the dismissal of all workers who had been guilty of having remained away from work for even a single day without sufficient motive. This dismissal is noted in the "work-card" of the individual concerned; it thus reduces the dismissed and his family to unemployment and misery. All these measures, however, have not yet appeared adequate to satisfy Stalin. In December 1932 he instituted the régime of internal passports, which left far behind the strictness of police control before the Revolution. The new passports, which contain detailed information on all matters regarded as likely to prove interesting to the political police, must be furnished with a

special *visa* before a citizen of the U.S.S.R. could be absent from home for even twenty-four hours.[1]

Such measures can scarcely even be imagined in any constitutional "capitalist" State. The silence of the Constitution of 1936, on liberty of displacement, would seem to indicate that no change is contemplated in this respect.

As to individual liberties, which are explicitly proclaimed by the new Constitution in the articles cited above, and in particular in Article 125, they certainly contain very broad formulae, but are, in fact, merely make-believes. Anything like real individual liberty is unknown in the U.S.S.R. The "liberties" referred to aim in reality only at serving such practical purposes as "the interests of the workers" and "the needs occasioned by the building up of Socialism." The new "rights" of the citizens signify the liberty to sing the praises of all the "achievements" of the Soviet régime, but not to criticize them.[2]

The exact meaning of Article 125 cannot be interpreted in any other manner. And as if to forbid all possibility of comprehending sovietic "liberty" in the usual acceptation of the term, the *Pravda* hastens to comment, with the incontestable authority which belongs to the official organ of the Communist Party: "In the country of the Soviets," it says, "the rotten Press of the bourgeois, the *Mensheviks*, and the Revolutionary Socialists has been repressed for ever, at the

1 Permission to cross the frontier and pay a visit abroad is almost impossible to obtain, except in the case of an official mission, or by special favour on the part of the authorities.

2 The Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. of May 11, 1925, which, in fact, was a new edition of that of July 10, 1918, contained the following provisions: "In view of ensuring to the workers a veritable liberty in the expression of their opinions the R.S.F.S.R. abolishes the subordination of liberty to capital, and hands over to the worker and peasant class all the technical and material means necessary to the publishing of newspapers, pamphlets, tracts, books, and all other printed matter, and guarantees the free circulation of these throughout the country" (Art. 5). "In view of ensuring to the workers a veritable liberty of public meeting, the R.S.F.S.R. recognizes to the citizens of the sovietic Republic the right of freely organizing gatherings, meetings, processions, etc. It places at the disposal of the working and peasant class all buildings suitable for the organization of popular gatherings" (Art. 6). Thus, there is really no difference in principle between Art. 125 of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. and the corresponding articles of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. of 1925. In the former liberty is restricted by "the interests of the workers" and "the needs of the building up of Socialism," while the latter interprets it explicitly as "liberation from the yoke of capital." As the proclamation of liberty in 1918 and 1925 resulted in a complete negation of all liberty, there is no reason to believe the Stalin Constitution will lead to anything better.

same time as capitalism. . . . The liberty of speech and of the Press are powerful instruments in the consolidation of the Socialist régime. Whoever postulates the overthrow of the Socialist régime is an enemy of the people. He will not obtain a sheet of paper, he will not be able to cross the threshold of a printing office, should he try to fulfil his wretched purpose. He will not find a hall, a room, or a mere corner in which to spread his poison by speech."[1] At the VIIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of Soviets, Stalin himself declared categorically: "In the U.S.R.S. there is no basis for the existence of several parties; nor, consequently, for the liberty of parties. In the U.S.S.R. there is a basis for the Communist Party alone."[2] Such an authorized interpretation of Article 125 cuts short all illusion on the part of those who might be inclined to think that the Soviet dictatorship would to-day be disposed to recognize the right of citizens of the U.S.S.R. freely to express their opinions. Until proof is advanced to the contrary, neither the statements of Stalin nor the interpretation of the *Pravda* will allow us to attach to the "rights" proclaimed by the 1936 Constitution the significance which this word possesses in modern constitutional States.

The inviolability of the person is one of the fundamental principles on which rests the very existence of such States. This principle is officially recognized in the Stalin Constitution. Article 127 declares: "Inviolability of the person is ensured to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. No person can be arrested, except by authority of the tribunal or with the sanction of the Public Prosecutor." The mere fact that, according to the exact meaning of this article, inviolability of the person does not extend beyond "sanction by the Public Prosecutor" —who is appointed by the Central Government and is dependent

1 *Pravda*, June 22, 1936. *Izvestia*, the organ of the Soviet Government, gave an identical interpretation to the articles of the Stalin text: "Liberty will be accorded to everybody," it said, "except to those whose acts and ideas oppose the interests of the workers, and those whose object is to demolish the Socialist régime. No lunatics will be able to hold meetings; neither will criminals, monarchists, *mensheviks*, revolutionary socialists, etc. . . ." (*Izvestia*, August 6, 1936, over G. Katanian's signature.)

2 *Pravda*, November 26, 1936. In order to repudiate liberty of opinion, the Soviet Government willingly makes use of the unconvincing argument that there are no more classes in the U.S.S.R. which—as will be shown later—is denied by the facts. For example, Stalin said, during the VIIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of Soviets: "Several parties, and, by deduction, liberty of parties can exist solely in a community in which co-exist antagonistic classes with mutually hostile interests. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer any such classes." (*Pravda*, same date.)

on it—demonstrates, however, that the Stalin Constitution does not ensure to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. any juridical and real inviolability, such as exists in a modern constitutional State. This document does not hold out any hope of improvement although, because this is not the first time that inviolability of the person has been proclaimed in the U.S.S.R. The Code of Procedure (in Articles 8, 179, 186) published February 15, 1923, and which is still in force, verbally guarantees individual rights no less then claims to-day the Constitution of 1936. But the stipulations of that Code have had no influence on the attitude of the Moscow Government towards the individual sacrificed to the building up of Socialism. As if to avoid all possible misunderstanding, Stalin has plainly affirmed that his Constitution did not inaugurate any new juridical era. "Between a programme and a constitution," he said on November 25, 1936, in his report to the VIIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of Soviets, "there is an essential difference. While the programme speaks of that which is not, of that which must be obtained and conquered in the future, the Constitution must speak, on the contrary, of that which already exists in the present, of that which has been obtained and conquered. From this point of view the new Constitution represents the net result of the progress accomplished, the schedule of the conquests made. It ratifies, it fixes in the law what has been effectively obtained and conquered"; which may be summarized as signifying that the author of the Constitution of 1936 expects, basically, everything to remain as in the past.

Articles 118 to 122, of the Constitution, which guarantee to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. the largest variety of material and moral benefits, have also a purely academic value, as they are devoid of all practical bearing. They are certainly full of fine words. The Soviet Press, in its analysis of the Stalin Constitution, generally puts forward these clauses and deduces from them the superiority of the Soviet Constitution over all other Constitutions in the world. "The right to work! The right to education! The right to holidays!" the *Pravda* delightedly exclaims; "the vast majority of the people in the world pronounce these words to express a cherished dream, which has hitherto never been realized, but to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. they have become natural, self-asserting rights."[1] Undoubtedly, they promise to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. sanatoria,

1 *Pravda*, October 16, 1936.

convalescent homes, holiday centres, clubs, old age pensions, provision for the sick and disabled, national insurance for the workers, free medical attendance, a vast system of health resorts, free education of all grades, scholarships "for the vast majority of pupils in the higher schools," etc. But, in a country where the standard of comfort of the average worker is below the level which is often enjoyed elsewhere by the unemployed labourer, such promises sound hollow in the ears of most of the working people.[1]

Real Nature of the Stalin Constitution

The real nature and importance of the new Constitution cannot be gauged from the mere fact that Stalin, "the Leader of the nations of the U.S.S.R. and of the world proletariat," had openly recognized and proclaimed in 1936 principles which until then had been stigmatized in the land of the sickle and the hammer as "bourgeois prejudices." Such a proclamation is certainly in itself very symptomatic of the present tendencies in the U.S.S.R. The changes which have occurred in the official phraseology are an unquestionable indication of the psychological changes which are in progress throughout that country. But if the Stalin Constitution is really to be considered as an event of consequence, its importance is not to be sought in the plane of democratic advancement, nor in that of the recognition of individual rights. Its profound meaning is to be found in the fact that it consecrates Stalin's victory in the struggle for personal power which he had pursued for many years, with such tenacity and success, both in the country and in the Party itself.

Only after Stalin had transformed his party into a definitely docile instrument in his hands could he afford to give up, not only in fact but formally, the then prevailing fiction according to which all political power was vested in the State machinery, whereas the Communist Party was only authorized to tend useful advice to the Government. In his new Constitution, Stalin first of all swept away all that which, already emptied of all substance, had become mere trappings. Without any consideration he simply suppressed the Congresses of Soviets, as well as the Central Executive Committee. He then, for the first time, officially recognized, under a constitutional form, the Communist Party as an organ of State power;

1 See the chapter, "The Results of the Bolshevik Experiment," for details concerning the standard of living of the masses in the U.S.S.R.

more so, to a great extent he assimilated the Party to the State itself.[1]

At the same time, the new Constitution has tended to modify the very basis of the Communist Party. The word "proletariat" figures in it only once—in the first chapter—which is in the nature of a preface. The text of the Constitution has been purged of certain terms which were formerly very much in vogue. Thus the term "Soviets of Workmen's and Peasants' Deputies" has been replaced by "Soviets of Workers' Deputies," in which the intellectuals now occupy an important place. In its comments on these changes, the *Pravda* (June 18, 1936) underlines the role which is reserved for the latter. "The New Constitution," this paper states, "reflects one fact of exceptional importance: that of the equality of rights of the intellectuals who are recognized as masters of the Soviet country, on entirely equal terms with the working class and the peasants. . . The Soviet intellectual is a member of society who is equal in rights to all others, a citizen of a country which has done away with the exploiting classes, and in which the working class, the collectivized peasants, the intellectuals enjoy equal rights and benefits."[2]

1 The official transformation of the Communist Party into a part of the body of the State was for a long time in preparation. In 1930 it was not the State officials who were instructed to carry out the collectivization of the rural areas, but devoted members of the Communist Party. From 1931 all the more important laws and decrees of the U.S.S.R. appeared under the double signature of Molotov, the President of the Council of Commissars of the People, and of Stalin, the General Secretary of the Party. After the XVIIth Party Congress (January 1934), members of the Political Bureau of the Party were placed at the head of all the principal Commissariats of the People. To-day there is not a single member of this Bureau who does not hold some high sovietic post. Stalin himself is no exception to this rule, for in 1935, at the VIIth Congress of Soviets, he was elected a member of the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. Several years ago, special sections, endowed with parallel powers to those held by the Commissars of the People, were attached to the Central Committee of the Party, and the latter was entrusted with the direct supervision over the various People's Commissars. Thus, little by little, Stalin has for several years been preparing the way for the transformation of the organs of the Communist Party into a veritable State machinery. What were formerly the State organizations proper have now become merely wheels in the machinery of the Communist Party.

2 For the *Pravda* any pretext is good to belittle the pre-revolutionary intellectuals. In present-day Russia it is common to underrate the pre-revolutionary intellectuals in comparison with those of Soviet upbringing. According to the *Pravda*, new intellectuals should take for their motto the words of the great Russian physiologist, I. P. Pavlov: "Never imagine that you already know everything." This is an ironic and cruel distortion of the truth, when it is recalled that the Soviet Government has made of the Marxian doctrine an absolute and intangible truth, and that it forbids the unhappy Russian intellectuals to have any different conception of the world other than that which it postulates.

Even before the publication of the draft of his Constitution, Stalin referred more than once to the importance of the "non-Party" Bolsheviks. The substitution of the term "Workers"[1] for that of "Workmen and Peasants," and the attentions paid to the sovietic intellectuals, are so many satisfactions accorded to "non-party Bolsheviks" (i.e. those who although not members of the Party are considered as sharing Bolshevik ideas). At the moment when the Communist Party obtains official recognition of its predominant influence over the State, Stalin plainly shows his desire to recast the internal structure of the Party. The recruiting of party workers merely on the basis of their political opinions no longer satisfies him. In his closing speech at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on March 5, 1937, he strongly emphasized "the necessity, when recruiting Party workers, of taking into account, first of all, their political qualification, i.e. the political confidence of which they were worthy, and afterwards their professional qualification; that is to say, their aptitude to perform given functions." He saw the possibility of carrying out this method of selection by simultaneous checking of the party workers from above and from below; in other terms, by the inflexible practice of "democratic centralism." This centralism implies, in the first place, "the absolute electivity of all the organs of the Party, the right of presenting and of refusing candidates, the secret of the vote, freedom of criticism, and also self-criticism."

In putting forward this thesis, however, Stalin said not a word of what should be done in the event of instructions coming from "above" being in opposition to those coming from "below." In any case, "democratic centralism," untiringly advocated by Stalin for some time past, is applied in such a way that the first half of the appellation—"democratism"—is limited to the lower organs of the party structure and the second—"centralism"—is the working principle of the higher organs. "It may be useful to recall," the *Pravda* remarks in a leading article on April 9, 1937, "that democratic centralism means the electivity of all the directing organs of the Party, from the summit to the base, and that it maintains, at the same time, for the lower grades and for all the members of the Party, the obligatory character of all the decisions taken by the superior organs. . . No one has relieved the latter of their

1 In Russian *trudiaschiesia,* which term covers both manual and intellectual workers.

responsibility for the direction of the elections; no one has deprived the district (*rayon*) committees of their right, or absolved them from the duty of rectifying mistakes, and even of annulling elections, when these have given rise to a violation of the directives emanating from the Central Committee, or to an infraction of the statutes of the Party."

Thus, the recasting of the Party's internal organization now under way—often in an inconsistent form—does not in the least affect Stalin's all-powerfulness in the Communist Party.

The new Constitution, in conclusion, marks the highest level the Stalin dictatorship has ever reached in the course of its evolution. It makes the Supreme Council the highest governmental authority in the country and the custodian of the sovereign power. At its head is the Praesidium, exercising the effective direction of the administration of the country; but in fact it is Stalin who still holds and will hold, as in the past, all the controlling levers in his hands. This was fully confirmed by the operation of the Constitution.

The Supreme Council Election of December 1937

The first elections to the Supreme Council of U.S.S.R., under the Constitution of 1936, took place on December 12, 1937, on the basis of universal suffrage, with direct, equal, and secret voting.

The election campaign demonstrated practically that the electors called on to vote for the deputies who would constitute the Supreme Council were still less free to manifest their real will than might have been previously supposed. The text of the new Constitution accepts the possibility of a certain electoral struggle occurring in each electoral area, between several candidates nominated by "social organizations" and "workers' societies," as set forth in Article 141.[1] In the course of an interview with Mr. Roy Howard, a

1 The electoral struggle for the campaign of December 1937 could only be very ephemeral considering the instructions which the Central Committee of the Party gave on the manner it should be conducted. They state: "It is essential not to keep aloof from the elements which do not belong to the Party, but to agree with them to nominate candidates in common. These are the party tactics." (*Pravda*, October 20, 1937.) The instructions have guarded against the case that the candidates nominated by the party organizations alone would not be supported by the electors outside the Party, which latter form the overwhelming majority of the electorate. To this effect the party instructions prescribe that mixed election meetings should be held between party electors and non-party electors where common candidates would be nominated by mutual "agreement." Ordinary prudences would of course incite non-party members to assert in these "agreements" their complete loyalty to the dominant Communist Party. In the rather

representative of the American United Press, Stalin himself categorically declared some months before the official adoption of "his" Constitution: "The Communists will not be alone in presenting candidates. Others will be nominated also by all kinds of social organizations outside that Party, of which hundreds exist in the U.S.S.R. Some millions of electors will examine the merits of the candidates, and will reject the bad ones by striking out their names on the ballot papers, and designating the best by voting for them. The election will turn on problems which will be as arduous as they are numerous."[1]

As a matter of fact, no electoral struggle took place for the designation of the members of the Supreme Council. In each electoral area one single candidate was nominated by vote of a public assembly, composed of representatives of the organizations of the Communist Party and of organized groups outside that Party. The electors were forbidden to substitute, on the ballot papers, any other name whatever in place of that of the official candidate. It is not astonishing that the correspondent of the *New York Times*, fifteen days defore the date of the elections, was able to telegraph to his newspaper the exact list of the future members of the Supreme Council.[2] The only mistake he made was not to have foreseen that orders from high places would, at the last moment, cause the withdrawal of the candidatures of certain Soviet dignitaries who were suspected of having become less sure politically; as was the case, among others, of Alksnis, the chief of the Soviet Air Forces, and of the brothers Mezhlauk, eminent and active members of the Communist Party. The manner in which the elections were conducted, however, did not prevent Stalin from declaring emphatically, on

improbable event, however, that in the mixed meetings an undesirable candidate should secure nomination, it was ordained that this "independent and free" decision should be amended by the "election committees," which had the means to refuse, purely and simply, the registration of such a nomination. The *Pravda*, not without good grounds, therefore stated that "the main thing at this stage in the election is to secure the good composition of the election committees." The members of these committees were recruited among the social organizations and the workers' societies; above all, among the trade unions, the Communist organizations, the "Communist Youth" societies, the meetings of the factory workers, and those of the *kolkhozian* peasants. (*Pravda*, October 20, 1937.)

In point of fact, in practically all cases the elections passed off without any such complications as foreseen by the Party instructions.

1 "Interview with the representative of the American Press, Roy Howard, on March 1, 1936," by J. Stalin. (Published by the Central Committee of the Party.)

2 See *New York Times*, November 25, 1937.

the eve of the polling: "Never before—no, really never—has the world ever seen elections so completely free, and so truly democratic! History has recorded no other example of the kind!"

According to Soviet official information, the results of the elections of December 12, 1937, were as follows: The total number of electors registered was 94,138,159, which represented 55·4 per cent of the total population. Of these, 91,133,153 electors, or 96·87 per cent of those registered, actually voted. This percentage is certainly exceptionally high, but it must not be forgotten that at the moment of voting a special stamp was affixed to the elector's passport, which exposed non-voters to the risk of being considered guilty of seditious tendencies. This fact alone makes it highly significant that, in spite of the enormous pressure put upon electors by the administration, a comparatively large proportion of them had the courage to refrain from voting for the official candidates. The Central Election Commission, in fact, announced that it had had to annul 2,126,390 ballot papers, and that, on the other hand, the name of the official candidate had been struck out on 1,194,476 papers.[1]

The *Pravda* rejoiced in stating, in very general fashion, that the members of the Supreme Council "are the veritable elect of the people, the custodians of its will, of its desires, of its hopes."[2] This in no way alters the fact that the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* was able to inform his journal, a fortnight before the elections, who would be the occupants of over 1,000 seats in the Supreme Council—out of 1,143 deputies to be elected—and to state that this assembly would include 246 high dignitaries of the Communist Party occupying important posts in the direction of the Party, either at Moscow or in the provinces; 365 civil and military officials, of whom 52 were members of the political police, including its head Iezhov; 78 representatives of Soviet intellectuals; 131 workmen (mostly *stakhanovists*); 223 *kolkhozian* peasants (also mostly *stakhanovists* or else directors of *kolkhozes*).

According to the official figures given at the opening of the first session of the Supreme Council in January 1938,[3] the 1,143 deputies which compose it are made up as follows: the Council of the Union consists of 569 members, of whom 77 are women; the Communists number 461 (81 per cent); and those not belonging to the Party 108 (19 per cent). The Council of the Nationalities consists of the

1 *Pravda*, December 17, 1937.
2 Ibid., December 15, 1937.
3 Ibid., January 15, 1938.

representatives of 54 nationalities. Its 574 deputies, of whom 110 are women, comprise 409 Communists (71 per cent) and 165 not belonging to the Party (23 per cent). The greater number of the deputies are less than forty years of age.

A representative Chamber thus elected and composed can certainly not be held to indicate the existence among the population of any solid basis for a Soviet dictatorship. In point of fact, it must be always an obedient instrument in the hands of the dictator. And yet Stalin—as though fearing the possibility of some manifestation of independence in the Supreme Council—insisted strongly, in a speech made the night before the polling, on the fact that any deputy may be removed at any moment. Let it not be forgotten, he said, that by virtue of the text of the Constitution, "the electors have the right to unseat any deputy before the expiration of his term of office, in the event of his leaving the right path and attempting to be too clever!"[1] Under present conditions in Soviet Russia, any such dismissal could manifestly only be the result of special orders from high places.

The First Session of the Supreme Council

The first session of the Supreme Council, which was elected as just explained, opened on January 12, 1938, and lasted a week, till January 19th. To read the Soviet Press, it accomplished in these few days an enormous amount of constructive work, and gave proof of a political maturity such as is hardly to be found in the parliaments of capitalist countries.

However, the reports of the public sessions published in the columns of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* show that, except for a certain number of changes in the administrative divisions of the different republics, the deliberations of the Supreme Council were limited to the election of its Praesidium, the appointment of a new Council of People's Commissars, the creation of new Commissariats already previously decided upon by government ordinances and the adoption, in Article 49 of the Constitution, of a new paragraph authorizing the Praesidium of the Supreme Council to proclaim a state of siege on the whole or a part of U.S.S.R. territory.

In these brief sittings, it must be remembered, all votes, without exceptions, were unanimous and without even a single abstention.

1 *Pravda,* December 12, 1937.

The Soviet Parliament showed itself, as was to be foreseen, entirely obedient to the dictates of the Communist Government.

The two highest official positions of the system were retained, as in the past, by Kalinin and Molotov. The former, who hitherto was President of the Central Executive Committee, has now become President of the Supreme Council, and the latter has kept the presidency of the Council of the People's Commissars.[1]

The composition of the Council of People's Commissars was modified to the extent that it was completed by the creation of three new Commissars: naval, mechanical construction, and deliveries in kind.[2] On the other hand, henceforth, the President of the State Bank has a right to a seat on the Council, and so finds himself freed from the direct authority of the People's Commissar for Finance.

Finally, before breaking up, the Supreme Council appointed three permanent Commissions: legislation, budget, and foreign affairs.

The concrete results of the first session scarcely seem to correspond to the excessive praise of which they were the object in the Soviet Press. As was to be expected, the U.S.S.R. "Parliament" has given the impression of having been carefully staged in advance. Otherwise, what explanation could be given for the fact that the ardent enthusiasm of the delegates did not, simply by acclamation, enthrone Stalin in the Presidency of the Supreme Council? Was it not making a criminal attempt on his glory to inscribe his name, in alphabetical order, among the twenty-two ordinary members of the Praesidium?

Under the circumstances, Stalin showed himself faithful to his usual policy. He keeps away from honorary positions, in order to remain above the State machinery. In consequence, he incurs no official responsibility, and is content to move the pawns which he has himself placed in position. Furthermore, his real role has been

1 Before the vote on the list of the new People's Commissars, which Molotov had been ordered to submit to the approbation of the Supreme Council, the latter heard several speakers make bitter criticisms on the doings of Krylenko, who had, earlier on, as Public Prosecutor of the U.S.S.R. and as People's Commissar of Justice, faithfully carried out Stalin's wishes. On the other hand, France has been accused of tolerating and even of favouring, on her territory, the active enemies of the U.S.S.R., in spite of the pact which unites them.

Such speeches would show a certain independence in the attitude of the members if, however, the principal speaker had not been Zhdanov, one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, that is to say, one of the close collaborators—or subordinates—of Stalin himself. There is every reason to believe that he spoke according to orders received. So Krylenko and Kerzhentsev (President of the Committee for Fine Arts, also blamed for his bad management) were not kept in their positions.

2 See p. 201.

clearly brought to light by Molotov in a speech made on January 19, 1938, from the tribune of the Supreme Council and in which he says: "In all important questions, we, the Council of the People's Commissars, shall ask advice and instructions from the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and, in the first instance, from Comrade Stalin. . That, in spirit and in letter, is in conformity with our great Constitution."[1]

The Economic Functions of the State

If the political structure of the U.S.S.R. is distinctly authoritative in its nature and for all practical purposes amounts to an absolute autocracy, the economic régime is characterized by a State monopoly over industry, trade and transports, and by the collective organization of agriculture. And thus is brought about the socialization of all the means and instruments of production, as called for by the Marxian doctrine.

Since the economic functions of the State are in that country developed to the maximum, economic administration in U.S.S.R. naturally plays an incomparably greater role than in the capitalist States.

The Higher Economic Organisms

Among the decisions taken by the higher organisms of the U.S.S.R.—the Central Committee of the Party, the Council of Commissars of the People, the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union (now replaced by the Praesidium of the Supreme Council)—the overwhelming majority of those which have been made public relate to economic problems.

The leading part in the Council of Commissars of the People is played by the Commissariats which deal with economic questions. No fewer than eight Commissariats[2] are devoted to industry, two to trade, and two others to transportation. A further two deal with agricultural matters, another with finance, and yet another with communications. Lastly, there is a number of special commissions which are given the same rank as the Commissariats of the People; among them is found the most characteristic organism of the régime—the State Planning Commission or *Gosplan*, which is

1 *Pravda*, January 20, 1938.
2 Including those the creation of which was sanctioned by the Supreme Council in January 1938.

responsible for the plan ruling the entire economic life of the country.[1]

As compared with the sixteen economic Commissariats thus enumerated, the Council of Commissars of the People of the U.S.S.R. comprises now only six Commissariats which have no relation with economic matters. From the comparison of these figures may be seen the importance of the part played by economics in the working of the Soviet State machinery. It is true that educational matters are handled by the Union Republics individually (that is by the various component parts of the Soviet Union) and that questions connected with labour are now settled outside the Council of Commissars of the People, by a special body called the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. This Council is allowed to communicate with the various State Departments only through the medium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Administration of Industry

The principle of the State monopoly in industrial matters was not established at a single stroke. Towards the end of the period of "War Communism"—that is, until 1921—nearly all industrial undertakings had already been nationalized in fact. At the date of the introduction of the "New Economic Policy"—known as the *N.E.P.*—in 1921, many of the medium- and small-scale concerns were handed back to their former proprietors. At the same time a large number of permits were issued, authorizing the opening of new private undertakings.

When the *N.E.P.* was suppressed, to make way for intensified industrialization, private industrial concerns were again nationalized, without any special law being promulgated to authorize such a step. At present, all industrial activity is in the hands of the State. The only legal breach existing in this monopoly is represented by

1 Created in 1930, the *Gosplan* acquired enormous importance when the U.S.S.R. began the policy of industrialization, on the basis of five-year plans. This body administers nothing directly, but elaborates plans quinquennial or annual—which determine the whole of the country's production and the distribution of its output. All the economic Commissariats mentioned above act on the basis of these plans. The *Gosplan* has no power to take decisions. The plans drawn up by it, in order to become applicable, must be ratified by the party organisms (usually by its Central Committee, and sometimes by the Party Congress). Only thereafter they are submitted, mainly for form's sake, for the approval of the higher institutions of the State (until the introduction of the new Constitution to the Central Executive Committee of the Union).

handicrafts carried on by artisans of the peasant class, during their spare time. Nevertheless, these village craftsmen, called *kustari*, are embodied in the "Artisans' Co-operative Association," which, under sovietic conditions, is reduced to being a mere instrument in the State. Its members are compelled to buy their raw materials through State channels, unless they produce them by their own labour, and they are also obliged to sell their output through official shops, unless they have the good luck of being able to deliver their work direct to consumers.[1]

Administration of Commerce

A distinction must be made between foreign and internal trade. The former was monopolized by the State as from the beginning of 1918, and maintained, without the slightest break, under this system during the twenty years which have passed since. This is perhaps one of the most stable factors in Communist economy.

In the domain of external commerce, fluctuations have occurred

1 On closer study of the sovietic system of administering industry, the principal stages in its evolution may be schematically set forth as follows:

(1) War Communism (1918 to 1921). Absolute centralization. Undertakings were directly subordinated to the Moscow commissariats and enjoyed no independence. Absence of all intermediary links, such as the later created "trusts."

(2) First period of the *N.E.P.* (1921 to 1926). The functioning of undertakings was recast. A budget was attributed to each of them analogous to those of private undertakings. Definite production costings were imposed, which should not be exceeded. Trusts were created for the purpose of regularizing production. Syndicates were organized for centralizing purchases of raw materials and the sale of output. The instructions issued by the Central Authority were reduced to the minimum.

(3) Second *N.E.P.* period (1926 to 1929). The external structure was unchanged, but the intervention of the central officials was constantly increasing. They determined the volume of production, the wholesale prices charged by the selling State undertaking to the buying one, as well as the credits accorded to State enterprises by State financial institutions. The intermediate functions of the trusts and the syndicates, in fact, were reduced to zero.

(4) First years of the industrialization policy (December 5, 1929, to February 1934). The trusts were quasi-suppressed. They retained no more than the technical direction and lost all their commercial functions. The undertakings obtained a little more independence. The syndicates were fused with the "directions" of the Central Commissariats for the purpose of forming "unified services," endowed with broad regulating functions.

(5) Recent years. The Congress of the Party prescribed a new reform, which has not yet been completed. The "unified services" have been liquidated, and the number of trusts diminished. The undertakings are linked up, as much as possible, directly with the Centre either of the Union or the Republic. Thus the principle of centralization, which marked War Communism, is reverted to.

analogous to those registered in industry. At the end of the period of War Communism, internal trade was, in fact, monopolized by the State, except for the illegal operations of small clandestine traders known as "carpet-baggers" and "speculators." In spite of the prohibitons and the heavy penalties to which they were subjected, these hawkers supplied the population with products of prime necessity, which it was impossible to obtain through the State supply system. Under the *N.E.P.*, wholesale and private trading were at first extensively authorized. Subsequently private wholesale trade was submitted to excessive taxation and arbitrary repressive measures, which resulted in its being effectively destroyed at the time of the expiration of the *N.E.P.* During the first years of the first quinquennial plan, private retail trade suffered the same fate.

After 1932 a certain relaxation occurred in internal trade. Markets were authorized, where the peasants were given the opportunity to sell produce and goods of their own production direct to consumers. Private professional trade continues, nevertheless, to be severely prohibited.[1]

Thus, there exists, at present, in the U.S.S.R. a State monopoly of all kinds of commerce—exterior and internal, wholesale and retail—with the sole exception of the products of the personal labour of the peasants and the *kustari*, the direct sale of which to the consumers is authorized.

Administration of Transports

The railways and sea-going and inland-water merchant shipping were nationalized from the birth of the sovietic régime. After some easing of the new system at the beginning of the *N.E.P.*, when the inland barge industry was partially denationalized, the State monopoly of transportation was re-established in all its rigour. Road transport is now also monopolized by the State, except that the peasants occasionally, with their own horses, carry loads for payment. In addition to the State motor cars a certain number of privileged workers and employees are allowed to own private motor cars, but they can be used only by their owners themselves and cannot serve for commercial exploitation.

1 In July and August 1936 the U.S.S.R. experimented a new recrudescence of the "fight against speculation." The "speculators" were hunted by the police, prosecuted, put on trial, and deported in batches. Their numbers, however, did not appear to diminish.

The Right of Private Property

The economic system of the U.S.S.R. is shown up in a general way by the sovietic right of property.

Private property in land has been annulled since the beginning of the sovietic régime (decree of November 8, 1917). Since then no modification has been made in this respect.

The Land Code of October 30, 1922, enacted during the period of the *N.E.P.*, stipulated that the right to the land placed at the disposal of peasants who exploited it themselves, is of an unlimited duration, and can only cease in cases provided for by the law (Article 11). At the time collectivization was introduced, this provision did not prevent the peasants considered as *kulaks* from being totally deprived of the use of their land, without any legislative act being passed to justify such a measure. Nor did it prevent the land belonging to all the other peasants from being converted into collective property, and they themselves from officially being turned into co-partners in the collective farming units called *kolkhozes*. In reality, they were reduced to the position of agricultural labourers, attached to the glebe lands. According to the second statute of the *kolkhozes* promulgated in February 1935, the members of the *kolkhozes* are entitled to the use of this collective land "for eternity."

The Land Code (Arts. 28 to 38) authorized the leasing of land for periods not exceeding twelve years. Where the land has been collectivized, these provisions have lost all practical value, as land under the *kolkhoze* system cannot be leased, and any attempts to do so are severely punished. The right to give and to take land on lease has been maintained only so far as it concerns the always diminishing category of peasants who have not yet been collectivized.[1]

The members of the *kolkhozes* are authorized to exploit for their own account and as they deem fit small "plots for private use" (*priusadebny uchastki*), which are attributed to each *kolkhozian* family

1 Under the *N.E.P.*, the Civil Code of November 11, 1922 (Arts. 71 to 84), instituted in the towns the long-lease system (*emphyteusis*) in respect of building land. The duration of the lease was fixed at sixty years for construction in stone, and at forty years for wooden buildings. This right may be alienated and the land thus leased can be mortgaged. These legal provisions still remain in vigour. Under the *N.E.P.* also, the decree of August 8, 1921, authorized the denationalization (i.e. the return to their former proprietors) of small buildings (in the towns and suburbs), but not of the soil on which they stand. This decree also still exists.

or household. It is admitted that the latter is granted such a plot for an indefinite period. However, the right to this plot is only retained by the peasant entitled to it as long as he remains in a given *kolkhoze* and works for it.[1] Should he quit the *kolkhoze* or be expelled from it, he loses the benefit of his "plot for private use." These allotments cannot be disposed of; the sale of the buildings alone is authorized and this only for the value of their materials.

The Constitution of December 5, 1936, confirming the existing situation, recognizes two forms of property: "Socialist" property and "individualistic" property. "Socialist" property in the U.S.S.R. "may take the form of State property (the common patrimony of the nation), or that of the co-operative property of the *kolkhozes*" (Art. 5). The soil, sub-soil, waters, forests, factories, workshops, mines, transports by railway, water or air, banks, means of communication, the great State undertakings, and, as a general rule, the whole of the habitations in the towns, are State property. The co-operatives and the *kolkhozes* are the proprietors only of their live-stock, equipment, crops, and buildings for their use. The land occupied by the *kolkhozes* does not constitute their property; all that is given to them is "the gratuitous use of it for an unlimited duration; that is to say, for eternity" (Art. 8).

The new Constitution reasserts at the same time that each member of a *kolkhoze* is entitled to a small "plot for private use" as just described (Art. 7). Finally, "the right of personal property" is recognized to the citizens in so far as concerns the "gains and savings resulting from their labour, their dwelling-house, personal farming belongings,[2] household goods and things for personal use and comfort" (Art. 10).

As regards non-collectivist peasant farming, Stalin's new Constitution does not recognize the right of the non-collectivized peasants to own land. It admits, in very vague terms, "small private farming by non-collectivized peasants and small private artisanal enterprises of *kustaris*, provided both are based on personal labour only and exclude the exploitation of other people's labour" (Art. 9). It also

1 According to the statutes of the *kolkhoze*, no member could be excluded except by a vote showing a two-thirds majority against him. Nevertheless, on April 20, 1938, Stalin was obliged to rescind this rule as there had been numerous cases of members having been expelled on the authority of the president alone.

2 This category includes, among other items, live-stock susceptible of being owned by individual members of the *kolkhoze* as their private property (Art. 7).

guarantees the right of inheritance in respect of all belongings which may be subject to the right of private property (Art. 10).[1]

"Socialist property" therefore, which constitutes, according to the Stalin Constitution, "the economic basis of the U.S.S.R.," is represented firstly by the national patrimony, or that of the State, and secondly by the co-operative property of the *kolkhozes*. The new Constitution, then, brought no essential modification of the principles previously applied in this domain. The term "Socialist property," moreover, is equally no novelty.

Soviet Government and Agriculture

In keeping with the right of property, there are in the U.S.S.R. three parallel systems of farming: (1) State farming, pure and simple (*sovkhozes*); (2) collective farming (*kolkhozes*); and (3) individualistic private farming. Of these, the second is at present by far the most important. The crops gathered in the autumn of 1936 were distributed among the three systems in the proportions of 11, 87, and 2. We will first examine, then, the second system, that of the *kolkhozes*.

Kolkhoze Collective Farming

The *kolkhoze*—or, to employ the official denomination, "the agricultural artel"[2]—is a system of farming based on the collective labour of a certain number of individual peasants and the fusion of their farms. On adhering to a *kolkhoze*, each peasant brings into the community his own land as well as the major portion of his livestock and agricultural implements. All these contributions cease to be his property and become collectivized. For his "personal cultivation" he only retains the already mentioned small "plot for personal use."

The combined farm is thenceforth conducted, according to a single plan, by a management elected at a general meeting of all the members of the *kolkhoze*. Out of the gross yield received by the

1 The right of inheritance, however, is allowed only as between husband and wife, and for descendants. Before 1922 the right of succession was limited to a total value of 10,000 roubles. Since then this limitation exists no longer.

2 The "artel" is the Russian term for a team or gang of workers who undertake a given amount of work together on a temporary and primitive co-operative basis. The system has always been very common in Russia, especially among harvesters and other seasonal labourers, who not only seek work together in the countryside in summer, but also in the towns during the winter.

co-operative farm during the year, the State takes a share, as a first charge: the *kolkhozes* are obliged to deliver to it a determined quantity of grain, dairy, meat, and other produce at fixed and extremely low "State prices" which in fact confer to these deliveries the character of taxation collected in kind.[1] Thereafter, further portions of the harvested crops are deducted and assigned to the various funds of the *kolkhoze* (for seeding purposes, forage, for the collectivized live-stock, insurances, etc.). The remainder is distributed among the members of the *kolkhoze* in proportion to the number of days of work contributed by them to the common undertaking. The unit used to calculate the compensation for the peasants' work is called "labour-day." This is a conventional amount of work measured in relation to its nature and quality. Settlement is made in cash, only in so far as the management retains such after all outside payments are made. The balance due to the "members" for their work is paid in kind.[2]

The above is a cursory summary of the fundamental rules governing the *kolkhozes*, as these regulations appear in the first statute of this farming system (March 1930), and in its second edition (February 1935). The latter, however, brought about a very important modification of the previous text, which indicates the evolution of the *kolkhoze* towards more emphatic collectivism. According to the first statute, 5 per cent of the gross output of the *kolkhoze* must be divided among the members, in ratio to the value of the property they respectively originally brought into the *kolkhozes*, that is to say, the property handed over by them to the common fund on their adhesion. This stipulation disappeared from the 1935 statute, which thus removed the last vestiges of the former inequalities of fortune among the members.

The new statute of the *kolkhoze* indicates, on the other hand, with more precision than the earlier one, that adhesion to the *kolkhoze* does not signify the complete absorption of the former individual farm. Each household in the *kolkhoze* continues to enjoy exclusively: (1) the dwelling-house; (2) the "plot for private use" the area of which may vary, according to local conditions, from ¼ to ½ hectare

1 The compulsory deliveries (*zagotovki*) which the *kolkhozian* peasants are called on to make to the State are dealt with on pages 296–300. Taxation payments in cash, which are comparatively much less important, were considerably reduced by the decree of July 21, 1936, when they were made to resemble an income tax.

2 See chapter "Results of the Bolshevik Experiment," which deals more fully with the "labour-day" (p. 300).

and in some regions up to 1 hectare (or over half an acre to 1¼ acres, and sometimes to as much as 2½ acres); (3) a certain number of cattle (except horses). As a general rule these privately owned cattle consist of a cow, two calves, and a certain number of goats, pigs, and sheep, as well as a quantity of poultry.[1] The *kolkhoze* is thus a complex agglomeration of a number of tiny individual farms and one large collective farm.

To understand exactly the real nature of *kolkhoze* farming it must not be overlooked that in the administration of the collective farm "*kolkhoze* democracy" is brought about in much the same way as is "Soviet democracy" in the machinery of the State. The members of the management of a *kolkhoze* are recommended to the *kolkhoze* electors by the Communist Committee in such a way that, in reality, the life of the *kolkhoze* is conditioned by the Communist Party. Since it is also the Party which, in fact, operates the whole of the State machinery, the *kolkhozes* may be regarded in one sense as State concerns. The distinction is that the State not only runs no risk from their exploitation, but is in a position to draw levies from them on a basis fixed, in advance, in definite figures.

The Sovkhoze

The purely Statist system of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. is best illustrated, perhaps, by the *sovkhozes*, which are sometimes expressively called "the State wheat factories."[2] The *sovkhoze* is a State agricultural undertaking, in which all the work is done by paid workers, under the supervision of a manager and a staff appointed by the State—in fact, by the Party—and whose entire revenue goes to the State. Groups of Soviet farms are merged to form a "trust." These trusts are subordinated, either directly or through the medium of boards of control, to the People's Commissar for Agriculture.

1 The quantities of live-stock mentioned are the maxima authorized in "purely agricultural districts" (*rayons*). They are somewhat higher in other kinds of districts. For details see p. 323 (footnote). Non-collectivized peasants are allowed to own one horse.

2 In 1936 a series of decrees ordained the transfer of much of the *sovkhoze* land to the *kolkhozes*. During the years 1936 and early 1937 more than 20 million hectares have been taken from the *sovkhozes* and given to the *kolkhozes*. (*Economical Problems*, 1937, No. 2, p. 97.) A special decree of July 20, 1936, which referred only to Georgia, even prescribed the wholesale liquidation of a series of *sovkhozes*, whose lands were sold on credit to some of the *kolkhozes*. Did these decrees signify disappointment with the *sovkhoze* "wheat factories," and foreshadow their coming distribution among the *kolkhozes*?

What Remains of Private Farming

Individualistic farms stand at the opposite pole to the large *sovkhozes*, and represent the last remains of peasant farming, as it was bequeathed to the Soviets by the old régime. The number of non-collectivized farms is rapidly decreasing, although in absolute figures it was quite recently still large. In 1928 there were still over 24,000,000 of them; by July 1, 1935, these had dwindled to 3,600,000, and on April 1, 1937, were further reduced to 1,395,100.[1] The sown area of the non-collectivized farms has been shrinking little by little, until in 1935 the average area per farm under cultivation was 1·9 hectares (less than 5 acres) per household.[2] Crushed by taxation and subject to all kinds of persecution they are doomed to disappear.

The programme of the Second Quinquennial Plan—which was designed to be completely executed by December 31, 1937—provided, among other things, for the liquidation of "these survivals of the capitalist régime in the rural districts," meaning the suppression of non-collectivized holdings. The *kolkhoze* farms being practically run by the State, State monopoly is rapidly becoming the sole unrivalled principle governing the economic life of the U.S.S.R. and will suffer no exceptions other than the tiny private plots of the *kolkhoze* families, the sale in the markets of the peasants' own produce, and the small home industries of the *kustari*.[3]

1 *Socialist Agriculture*, June 1, 1936, and November 7, 1937. *Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture*, November–December 1937, p. 228. *Planned Economy*, August 1937, p. 52. *Economical Problems*, February 1937, p. 98. More detailed statistics on the development of collectivism in the rural areas are given on pp. 283–302 and 321–324.

2 "Agriculture in the U.S.S.R.," *Yearbook for 1935*, p. 208.

3 Sovietic estimates of the U.S.S.R. population (see p. 148) have recently been doubted by Prof. Prokopovich in his Prague Bulletin, No. 139 (February 1938). From statistics of the urban population on January 1, 1933, and of its increase thereafter (*U.S.S.R. for Fifteen Years*, 1932, p. 218, and *Building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, 1936, p. 545) he figures the urban population on January 1, 1936, at 45·5 millions. At the same date, the peasant households, which comprise on an average 4·8 persons, numbered about 20·5 millions (see pp. 287 and 288), which makes 99 millions. Adding to these two items 10 millions of non-peasant rural population and workers employed by the *sovkhozes* (p. 288), Prokopovich arrives, for January 1, 1930, at a total population figure of about 154·5 millions, which he believes accurate within 2 or 3 millions, and concludes that during the years of the Second Plan the population has not increased but decreased. However interesting this calculation may be, it is more prudent not to use it until more precise information is obtained.

CHAPTER V

The Dictator and His Power

Lenin's Dictatorship

To those who knew Lenin and were able to analyse his mentality, it was obvious that both he and his adherents had been committed to dictatorship ever since the *Social-Democratic* Congress of 1903, when the Bolshevik group came into being[1]: that is, for many years prior to the November Revolution of 1917. It is true that Lenin was aware—he admitted it himself[2]—that "dictatorship is a terrible, cruel, sanguinary term: the expression of a ruthless, life and death struggle between two worlds . . . one of those words which must not be uttered lightly." Yet it was not surprising that, on coming into power, Lenin immediately forgot his ultra-democratic speeches and proceeded to exercise dictatorship which he had pictured as "a power not bound by any laws."

Apart from certain outward circumstances and also some purely theoretical considerations, Lenin was driven to the path of dictatorship by his own psychological bent. Like most fanatics, he was extremely intolerant. Any questioning of the principles he had laid down was apt to irritate him supremely. Those who did not agree with him he considered as his enemies. Towards them he was always ruthless. From the dictator of one single party the November

1 The well-known Russian *Social-Democrat* Potressov-Starover, who was one of the prominent members of that congress, wrote that during its progress Lenin's partisans showed their tendency "to high-handedness, to a single and centralized directing will." (A. N. Potressov, *Collection of Posthumous Articles*, Paris, 1937, p. 165.)
Trotsky, who also took part in that congress, accused the Bolsheviks, after its closure, of a trend towards dictatorship (see in the chapter "The Essence of Bolshevism," p. 119). He attacked them with great violence, but neither he nor his followers, the *Mensheviks*, could then foresee that in fourteen years' time the man who in 1903 accused Lenin of "lust for power" and "dictatorial designs" would become Lenin's right-hand man in establishing the most cruel dictatorship that history evèry knew. Trotsky, however, was not the only one in 1917 to change his attitude so completely. Many who considered themselves good democrats sided with victorious Lenin. 2 *The Communist International*, March 22, 1920.

Revolution made him the dictator of all Russia. "To all who waver and are unreliable, we have not only the right but the duty to apply emergency laws," said Lenin at the Congress of 1903.[1] This declaration did not differ materially from that which he made at the peak of his power, when he asserted that: "The proper place of the *Mensheviks* and *Socialist-Revolutionaries* was in prison, whether they act in the open or disguise themselves as non-party men. It is no longer a question, as at the time of the conferences, of amusing ourselves with the little game of opposition. We will confine the *Mensheviks* and *Socialist-Revolutionaries* behind prison bars."[2] Plekhanov, the *doyen* of Russian Marxists, was quite right when he remarked, in the first years of his relations with Lenin, that the man was "of the stuff of which Robespierres are made."

Lenin's Impulsiveness

Lenin was a man of great intellectual gifts, but he was liable to be carried away on an irresistible impulse. This is perhaps why there were so many breaks in the continuity of his policy and why many of his acts were not sufficiently matured by cool thinking. Whenever some attractive idea got hold of him, his whole being would immediately be transformed into a furiously working machine transmitting revolutionary energy to the masses through the Party he had created. The Party itself would probably have lost all value in his eyes if it had not played the part of a subtle and obedient "transmission belt," thus translating into action the idea which, for the moment, held him in its grip.

Terror as One of the Foundations of Lenin's Dictatorship

Entirely at the mercy of his impulses—to achieve victory at all costs and "march at full speed towards Socialism"—Lenin never hesitated for a single instant to employ that most frightful of all the instruments of dictatorship, the weapon of political terror. A disciple of Marx and Engels should have been reluctant to use such methods of government. Engels described terrorism as "senseless atrocities perpetrated by frightened people." For his part, Marx

1 Second ordinary Congress of the Russian *Social-Democratic* Party. Complete Minutes, p. 366.

2 Lenin's speech of April 9, 1921.

credited the Paris Commune of 1871—perhaps on insufficient grounds—with remaining free from "those acts of violence to which the revolutions and counter-revolutions of the ruling classes were accustomed to resort." Neither Lenin nor Trotsky, his closest associate at the time, was able to oppose theoretical arguments to those of their adversaries who repudiated terrorism in the name of Marx and Engels. But this did not deter the "leaders of the Russian proletariat" from practising it on a scale which left all the revolutions of the past far behind it. It is still impossible at present to pass a final judgment on the appalling and prolonged wave of terror which swept over Russia after the coming into power of the Bolsheviks. The greater part of the information relating to it is still buried in closed archives. The principal witnesses of the horrors of that period were its victims who have gone for ever. Yet Boris Souvarine, who played at one time an important part in the French Communist Party, and during his prolonged stay in Soviet Russia acquired a thorough knowledge of conditions there, is right when he says: "Whilst awaiting the judgment of the future it is clear that the volume of truth already known is sufficiently large to dispense with a detailed examination of all the accusations and a denial of this or that incident. When horrors grow to certain dimensions their precise variations matter but little. We know all that is essential even before the archives have disclosed all their secrets, and before all the witnesses have freely testified. Hostages shot, prisoners exterminated, innocents massacred, villages burned, rape, plunder and looting, reprisals, executions, and tortures, all this is too true in general to warrant being refuted in particular."[1]

Lenin's Outward Simplicity

With all Lenin's strong bent for dictatorship there was in his character one trait which, at least outwardly, made him resemble a popular leader. He was utterly simple in his habits, and rejected that outward pomp and splendour with which newly fledged dictators are so fond of surrounding themselves. This does not at all mean that Lenin had not a high opinion of his merits. On the contrary, real native modesty had no part in his spiritual make-up. But he loathed all incense-burning and flattery. In his estimation a proletarian dictator should resemble neither Cromwell nor Napoleon, still less an Oriental potentate. Lenin was by nature inacces-

1 B. Souvarine, *Staline*, Paris, 1935, p. 237.

sible to what he described as "Communist snobbery," and at the same time he could not tolerate the slightest expression of servility. He spoke of "burning out with red-hot irons" all subservient traditions and customs in the State service and in public life, and wanted to build up relations between the rulers and the ruled on the principle of what he called "plebeian simplicity."

On April 23, 1920, the Moscow town Soviet organized a solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Lenin's birth. Prominent Soviet dignitaries—Lunacharsky, Kamenev, Olminsky, Gorky, and Stalin—made speeches in honour of the leader of the November Revolution and the founder of the Communist Party. This celebration was, however, marred by the fact that Lenin flatly refused to attend it or listen to the eulogies showered upon him. The ceremonies, the jubilations, the compliments, the flatteries literally got on his nerves.

If he thus declined all that appeared to him as adulation or publicity, it was perhaps for the simple reason that there was no need for it yet. He was till his end on the crest of the revolutionary wave which had carried him into power. He felt himself to be the leader of the Revolution and to be vastly superior to those around him in intellect, education, and will power. Hence he sought neither glorification nor artifices to preserve his prestige.

Outward Character of Stalin's Dictatorship

Since Stalin's[1] advent to power, that spirit of plebeian simplicity which distinguished Lenin and gave his rule at least the outward appearance of "the people's rule," has disappeared.

It is true that when Stalin assumed power, the revolutionary ardour in Russia was already waning and the Leader was driven to resort to a number of artificial devices to reinforce his power. Yet few leaders would have dared to go to the length to which Stalin went in order to raise himself in the eyes of the masses.

In 1924, a few days after Lenin's death, Stalin spoke of him at a gathering of the high military school in the Kremlin. "I first met Lenin," he said, "in December 1905 at a Bolshevik conference in Tammerfors, in Finland. I expected to see the mountain eagle of our party, a man great not only politically, but even physically. My imagination had pictured him a giant, stately and imposing. How deep was my disappointment when I saw quite an ordinary man,

1 Stalin was born in 1879 (Trotsky was also born in this year).

of less than average height. He differed in nothing, nothing whatever, from the man in the street. It is usual to expect a 'great man' to be late for a meeting so that the audience should await his appearance with a thrill of anticipation, and when he arrives, whisper to each other: 'Look out, hush; there he is.' This ritual did not seem superfluous to me, because it impresses and inspires respect. Great again was my disappointment when I learned that Lenin had arrived at the meeting before the other delegates, and sitting in a corner, was having a most informal chat with some quite unimportant delegates to the conference. I will not conceal from you that this appeared to me then as a breach of certain indispensable rules of etiquette."[1] Under Stalin such breaches were no longer allowed.

In contrast to Lenin, Stalin in 1929 celebrated with great pomp the fiftieth anniversary of his birth. He had a volume of articles dedicated to himself, brimful of flattery, published at State expense. They were signed by the great Soviet dignitaries—Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Ordzhonikidze, Mikoian, Kuibyshev, Kalinin, Manuilsky, and others—who composed his closest entourage and were resolved to follow him to the end. But this, Stalin's first step in the path of self-advertisement, was nothing in comparison to what was to follow. At present a vast State mechanism in combination with a powerful party organization is working incessantly in order to consolidate the prestige and power of this one man by propaganda and pressure.

Films, radio broadcasts, photographs, posters, countless millions of copies of the daily Press, millions of tracts and books, pictures, statues; thousands of meetings, all organized on the same pattern, hourly and daily bring home to the people the fact that Stalin is the wisest, greatest, most considerate, and best beloved man on our planet.[2]

1 *Izvestia*, February 12, 1924.

2 An account of Stalin's appearance at the VIIth Congress of the Soviets gives a clear idea of the ritual adopted for the glorification of the dictator. "At 6.15," reports *Pravda*, "comrade Stalin appears. All the delegates rise as one man and greet him with a stormy and prolonged ovation. From all parts of the hall come the shouts of 'Long live the Great Stalin.' 'Long live our Vozhd.' A new outburst of applause and greetings. Comrade Kalinin declares the congress open, and reminds the audience that it is comrade Stalin who is the 'instigator, inspirer, and organizer' of the whole gigantic work of the Soviet Union. A new storm of applause passing into an endless ovation. The entire assembly rises and greets Stalin. Cries of 'Long live Stalin! Hurrah!' Comrade Filatov proposes to elect

There is no occurrence which is not seized on as a pretext for glorifying Stalin. The rescuing of the "Cheliuskin" Arctic expedition; the disaster to the air liner *Maxim Gorky*; the inauguration of a new plant; the celebration of the November Revolution—everything is made an occasion for extolling the Leader. The number of Stalin's portraits displayed over the crowd at the May Day demonstrations of 1935 broke all records. *Pravda* (May 4, 1935) reported triumphantly that there were "thousands of portraits, as well as bas-reliefs and statues of the Vozhd, and his name was repeated this morning a million times; it was cast in metal, embroidered on soft and transparent gauze tissues, or formed by wreathes of chrysanthemums, roses, and asters."[1] Stalin's name has been given to a number of towns: Stalino, Stalingrad, Stalinogorsk, Stalinbad, Stalinsi, Stalinsk, etc.

All Sense of Moderation Lost in the Glorification of Stalin

All sense of proportion has been lost in the exultation of Stalin. The incense wafted about his name reminds one of the hymns of praise sung to the caliphs in the *Arabian Nights* entertainment.

A striking specimen of this Oriental grandiloquence is the following address to Stalin published in *Pravda* (June 24, 1935) and submitted on behalf of 560,000 inhabitants of Daghestan (in the

a Praesidium of twenty-six members. The first elected on the Praesidium is Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin. Again cries of 'Hurrah' fill the hall, and the roar of applause is heard for a long time. The congress, standing, welcomes its beloved leader with enthusiastic clamour." (*Pravda*, January 16, 1935.)

1 The festival of physical culture in Moscow in the summer of 1935 was a typical example of the manner in which the enthusiasm of the masses is organized. "Five thousand young pioneers of the capital open the procession. Their eyes are fixed on the left wing of the mausoleum where Stalin stands, his face lit up by a smile. The children carry a banner on which flowers form the words: 'Greetings to comrade Stalin, the best friend of the pioneers.' 'Thanks to comrade Stalin for our happy life,' is inscribed on a panel carried by the pioneers of the Dzerzhinsky district. From afar comes an increasing roar. Aeroplanes appear. Their formation spells out the name of Stalin in the sky. The physical culture society 'Spartacus' emerges into the square. At the head of the column is a huge poster inscribed in golden letters: 'Greetings to the great Stalin.' With a song which ends the exclamation by 'Hurrah to Stalin,' Red Army soldiers march past the mausoleum. Scarcely have their voices died away when workers of the Dynamo plant, with sixty buglers at their head, enter the square. A large body of men carry on their shoulders a four-metre high portrait of comrade Stalin decorated with blue flowers." (*Pravda*, July 1, 1935.)

Caucasus): "Thy speech illumines our path like a lode-star. If the songs of our bards can delight thy ears—take them. If the statues and pictures of our artists can gladden thy eye—accept them. If our lives are needed by thee for the defence of the fatherland—take them. We have but one desire: that our humble message should reach thy ears. When we think that thou, Stalin, will read these lines, our muscles are filled with strength, our heads are lifted up, our eyes shine with the brightness of youth."

This form of servile adulation of the leader of the "Socialist" State is used not only by his Oriental subjects. The *Pravda* of February 1, 1935, has published a speech delivered by the Russian writer Avdeienko at the VIIth Congress of the Soviets. Its abject servility is incredible and the applause with which it was greeted shows an equal absence of dignity on the part of the congressists. "Centuries will pass," Avdeienko said, "and future Communist generations will think us the happiest of all mortals through the ages, for we have seen Stalin. Every time I had this opportunity I was under the spell of his strength, his charm, his greatness. I felt I must sing, shout, cry out aloud my delight and happiness. And here I am, I, standing on the same platform on which the great Stalin stood a year ago. In what country, in what part of the globe, would this have been possible? I write books, I am an author; I dream of creating a lasting work. I love a girl in a new way, I am perpetuated in my children . . . They will be happy—all this is thanks to thee, O great teacher Stalin. Our love, our devotion, our strength, our hearts, our heroism, our life—all are thine. Take them, great Stalin—all is thine, O leader of this great country. People of all times and all nations will give thy name to everything that is fine and strong, to all that is wise and beautiful. Thy name has and shall have a place in every corner of the earth, in every human heart. When the woman I love gives me a child the first word I will teach it shall be 'Stalin.'"[1]

The tone for this unlimited deluge of adulation is set by the official Soviet Press.

Stalin, the Source of all Soviet Life

Official Soviet propaganda strives to impress upon everyone that all that is good and wonderful in the country emanates solely from

1 *Pravda*, February 1, 1935.

the super mind and will of Stalin, the great Vozhd. "We are strong," writes *Pravda*, "by reason of our industrialization, our collective farming, our valiant Red Army, but our greatest strength, that which makes our country impregnable and invincible, lies in the union of the people with its leader Iosif Stalin."[1] "If in the course of the last decade our strenuous work has resulted in magnificent achievement, this is solely due to our having been guided by the genius of our age, comrade Stalin." "Stalin is the architect of the tremendous edifice called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."[2] Stalin is the source of all life in the Soviet Union. His thoughts run like electric currents through the Soviet Republic and set its mechanism in motion.

Stalin a Technical Genius

But Stalin is not only the driving force of all Soviet life; he has other great merits in various special domains. The courtiers that surround Stalin—all those People's Commissars, heads of trusts, factory and plant managers, directors of scientific institutes, and thousands of other willing and unwilling flatterers—unanimously declare that Soviet achievements in all branches of economic life are due solely to Stalin's personal action.[3]

1 *Pravda*, May 21, 1935. 2 Ibid., January 15, 1935.

3 "The U.S.S.R. has become steeled and invincible only because she is led by 'Stalin.' " (*Pravda*, February 2, 1935.) Agriculture is progressing because the *kolkhozes* have been given a new statute, and "that document is the work, above all, of the genius of our leader and master, comrade Stalin." Aviation is progressing because it is "under the general direction of comrade Stalin, who gives his personal lead in all important matters concerning it." Transport is improving because "comrade Stalin himself attends to the practical details of its workings and with the insight of genius unravels the most complicated problems and works out the details of organization." In the construction of the automobile decisive progress has been made because "on the basis of indications given by comrade Stalin we performed a great work of rationalization." Great achievements in the oil industry "were possible because of the personal help given by comrade Stalin." Merchant shipbuilding develops only "because we daily feel the powerful will of the leader of genius who gave the matter its due importance." Moscow grows and develops because it is "the whole of the vast and complex work of the general plan of its reconstruction on a new basis is directly guided by the great leader and master of toiling humanity, our comrade Stalin." The construction of canals is proceeding at a great pace because "the great instigator of all the gigantic hydrotechnical work in the Union is comrade Stalin." Whether it is the gold output, mechanized bakeries, schools, public health campaign, physical culture, everything is directed by Stalin in person. There is no sphere, no branch of work, no piece of land that have not been revived by his touch. He sees everything, he

One would think that in this "advanced" country nobody thinks no one has any initiative except Stalin himself. In comparison with this giant everyone else is a pigmy. Even in the field of market gardening it is impossible to dispense with Stalin. At least twenty-nine senior officials of the Commissariat for Agriculture unblushingly claim that Stalin's ideas "are invaluable directions for all the work done in the sphere of fruit-growing of the country."[1]

Stalin—"Scholar, Philosopher, and Writer"

Stalin is not only a technical genius, he is a sociologist, a philosopher, a great thinker "who perfects the theory of Marx and Engels." If we are to credit the novelist Babel, Stalin is a wonderful unequalled master of prose. "Look," exclaims Babel, "how Stalin chisels his speeches, how finely wrought are his words. We must labour to perfect the language as Stalin does." Another writer, Gladkov, proclaims: "The simplicity and sheer power of Stalin's language—those must be our model." "He educates the Soviet writers, those engineers of human minds," claims *Pravda*. The theatre, the fine arts, and the cinema, all flourish in the U.S.S.R. "under the powerful influence of Stalin's genius." Dovzhenko, a well-known film producer, declares unhesitatingly that the Soviet film industry "was set on its feet and grew thanks to comrade Stalin. . . . Long live its leader and thinker, the greatest man of our planet, Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin."[2] Shumiatsky, director of the head office of the film industry, follows in the steps of the others: "The daily instructions of comrade Stalin were the decisive factors which ensured the victories of Soviet cinematography." It is, however, Stalin's official paper which exceeds all bounds when it writes: "Our masters of the film have been learning from Stalin, and his tuition has already borne marvellous fruit. Only the mighty figure of Stalin, which is the quintessence of all the greatness of the coming era of mankind, and only our great country are at present able to breed genius and talent in all spheres of culture and art."[3]

knows everything, he can do everything. "The Moscow Underground was built on the intiative of Stalin. The White Sea-Baltic Canal was due to 'the idea and will of comrade Stalin.' " The tractor, chemical, and metallurgical plants were built according to Stalin's ideas. The plan of irrigation of the Transvolga steppes is also ascribed to Stalin's fertile brain. The Soviet Press claims all the above.

1 *Pravda*, June 8, 1935. 2 Ibid., January 1, 1935.
3 Ibid., January 12, 1935.

General Tone of Official Adulation of Stalin

The statements of the propaganda with which Stalin's Government floods the country inevitably lead to the conclusion that neither the enthusiasm of the shock workers, nor the countless sacrifices of millions of peasants, nor the self-denying work of the engineers, nor the technical and scientific assistance of foreign specialists, nor the inborn ability of the Russian people, play or played any important part in the economic and cultural progress of the Soviet Union. Impulses, ideas, initiative, organization, and direction—all come from Iosif Stalin. Communist propaganda, in the form which it has now assumed in the U.S.S.R., reduces everything to the glorification of the "leader," the "hero," the "divine architect," the omnipotent and omniscient creator.

Stalin is "Above Other Leaders"

Parallel with this worship of Stalin, the very history of the November Revolution is undergoing revision with the obvious idea of belittling the part which Lenin played and magnifying the merits of Stalin. It was not possible, it seemed almost indecent, at once, to invert the relative importance of the two men. The Soviet propagandists are still constrained to speak of Lenin's "precepts" and Lenin's doctrine, and to describe Stalin as Lenin's greatest and most gifted disciple. Yet, in the light of "recent researches" Lenin's personality grows less brilliant day by day. His halo pales. It seems, or rather it is even demonstrated, that Lenin was merely Stalin's colleague. In Barbusse's recent biography of Stalin, written with the aid of materials supplied by the dictator's entourage, we read that during the November Revolution "Lenin could not do without Stalin." Barbusse tries to impress upon his readers the idea that Lenin listened to Stalin in every emergency, and that, not being free from human frailties, he had moments of hesitation. The great Stalin, however, never hesitates and makes no mistakes. The higher military officers also hasten now to pay a special tribute to Stalin, asserting that if the Red Army—and consequently the Revolution—proved victorious "notwithstanding Trotsky's plans," it was only because, on the Eastern, Southern, Crimean, and Western fronts, it was, according to them, led by Stalin.[1]

1 "On the Volga front"—recalls a former artillery commander Kulik—"the position in 1918 was very bad. The state of things changed at once when Stalin

Gradual Uncrowning of Lenin

As Kirov one day declared, Stalin must be regarded as "the greatest man of all times and all ages."[1] What then becomes of Lenin when contrasted with this giant? True, he remains a great man, but one of lesser stature than his successor. This follows logically from all that is being daily asserted of Stalin.

In drawing his distinction between Lenin and Stalin, Barbusse lets fall a very curious remark which suggests that the hour of the official "uncrowning" of Lenin may be near at hand: "Let us say, if you like, that Lenin, owing chiefly to circumstances, was a political agitator. . . . It was Stalin who did most for the Revolution and committed the fewest errors."[2]

If we were to attempt to add up all the qualities which are attributed to Stalin by his subordinates in the State and party administration, we should arrive at the conclusion that he was indeed a superman. He would have combined Leonardo da Vinci's encyclopaedic knowledge, Peter the Great's broad outlook, Napoleon's military genius, and, in general, all the talents of the greatest men of history. Amidst the clouds of incense in which the figure of Stalin is wrapped constantly we are not surprised to read in *Pravda* that "a new phase of world history is started by the speeches of comrade Stalin."

Stalin's Advertising Campaign in Figures

Stalin utilizes the State and party mechanism for an advertising campaign on an unprecedented scale. One hundred and fifteen million copies of Stalin's orations alone have been published by the State printing office. No one in the country can raise his voice in reply to this deluge of printed matter of every kind with the one aim of glorifying Stalin. No one can even hint that Stalin, also, may err. He has monopolized speech; he alone talks; the rest

arrived at the front." "From the very first day we experienced the outstanding vigour of Stalin's strategic talent." Budenny, the inspector of Soviet cavalry, confirms the view that Stalin possesses exceptional gifts as a soldier and military strategist. In 1919 "only the success of Stalin's plan" made Rostov and Taganrog fall into the hands of the Soviet Government. (*Pravda*, January 3, 1935.) Tukhachevsky and other leading personalities of the Red Army also spoke of Stalin as a great strategist. All this enabled Karl Radek to proclaim Stalin "a military genius," the creator of the Red Army, and the organizer of its victories. (*Pravda*, February 23, 1935.)

1 Ibid., February 2, 1934. 2 Barbusse, *Staline*, Paris, 1935, pp. 312–313.

remain silent, if they do not endorse servilely what he says or participate in the "storms of applause."

Portrayal of Stalin's "Humane Nature"

From about 1934 a new note was introduced into the hymns of praise in Stalin's honour. For a long time the advertising mechanism strove mainly to impress upon the public the belief that Stalin was powerful, wise, great, a genius, "a man of steel,"[1] and so on. Then, suddenly, the existence of a living humanity was recalled. The Vozhd himself said that "without the men who have mastered it" "technical achievement is a dead thing." "The human factor—the 'cadres' as Stalin likes to put it—decides everything."[2] At once Stalin's glorifying machine began to adorn him with new titles. He was henceforth "the great humanitarian," "our own," "adored," "kind-hearted," "responsive," "affectionate," "tender," etc.[3]

"Popular Enthusiasm" in Connection with the New Constitution

The draft of Stalin's Constitution, published on June 12, 1936, was the occasion for a new outburst of "unanimous enthusiasm" on the part of the people. Both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* anticipated that "manifestations of universal joy" would not be long delayed. In the same

1 The pseudonym "Stalin" is derived from the word *stal*, meaning "steel": hence those constant allusions.

2 See the periodical, *The Building up of the Party*, No. 10, May 1935.

3 The depicting of Stalin's benevolence is, since 1935, found in all types of propaganda. Numerous photographs show Stalin among the *kolkhoze* farmers, who were invited to the Kremlin. Stalin shakes hands with a "simple" peasant woman, Evdokia Fedotova, the appointed president of the meeting. Addressing her as "thou," he graciously inquires from what part of Russia she hails. Impressed by this welcome from the Vozhd, she relates her impressions to *Pravda*. "I ran down the stairs as if I were quite young. I felt both happy and proud that he had noticed the way I worked, and appreciated it." Or else Stalin is shown embracing two children, and then waving a farewell to the people from the steps of the Bolshoi Theatre. (*Pravda*, May 17, 1935.) Again, he is shown in a news film, in the course of a physical culture parade tenderly bending over a little pioneer girl, Nina Zdrogova, who, trembling with emotion, hands him a bouquet of flowers. Stalin affectionately encourages her, and presents her with a box of sweets, which had been prepared beforehand, the whole scenario of the ceremony having been carefully planned, leaving no scope for improvisation. The "historical significance" of the scene at first escapes the spectator; but *Pravda* is there to explain the meaning of all Stalin's movements. With a great blast of trumpets, it says: "This scene embodies the great Leader's constant care for the needs and requirements of the children of our vast country." (*Pravda*, July 25, 1935.)

number in which the draft was first published, *Pravda* was confident that "in towns and villages, in factories and mills, in mines and railway depots, in fields and in cottages, in *auls* and *kishlaks*,[1] in fact everywhere, the draft would be discussed." It added that its pages were "open to the nation for an exchange of views on the new Stalin Constitution." *Pravda's* anticipations were fully justified. All over the country a discussion was engineered at full speed. Party committees and other bodies, writers, men of science, *kolkhozian* peasants, factory workers, *stakhanovists*, shepherds, Red Army soldiers, etc., from all parts of Russia, began to send in their opinion of the new draft to *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. To differentiate between those letters is not an easy matter. They are so much alike. At the same time they also bear a curious resemblance to the leading articles of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*.

All those appreciations of Stalin's Constitution seem to bear the official stamp. They are full of raptures about the "freest and happiest life," of assurances, that "nowhere is there such freedom, nowhere can one write, speak, and criticize so freely." A shepherd from a remote mountain village of Daghestan writes that he has been tending his flocks for about a hundred years and has "never been so happy." And, of course, in all these utterances the place of honour is assigned to admiration of the "Great Vozhd" himself. He is described as "the genius of mankind," "the wisest of leaders," "the great leader of the peoples," "the greatest man alive and who ever lived." One *kolkhozian* peasant sends his warm thanks to the Vozhd and the "dear Communist Party" for placing "such tremendous confidence in their people." In the eyes of this villager it is not the Government which must win and maintain the confidence of the people, but the people who must merit the confidence of their rulers. Can better proof be given of the servility which has been ingrained in every mind?

The speeches and writings dealing with Stalin's Constitution draft would have seemed to exhaust all conceivable forms of adulation. Yet, after its adoption by the VIIIth Congress of the Soviets, the newspapers sought to discover fresh expressions of eulogy in order to pay homage once more to Stalin's unbounded gifts. "His country's best son," "the brilliant author of the Constitution," "the wisest man of our age," "our leader, our guide, our father, our

1 *Aul* is the name for a Caucasian mountain village; *Kishlak* for a village in Central Asia.

master"—such were the praises bestowed on him by *Pravda*, which maintained that by his Constitution he had "turned over a new leaf in the history of mankind."[1] Some were so zealous that they soon realized that no ordinary expression of enthusiasm, affection, and devotion could convey their sense of "unbounded delight and stupefaction" at the new Constitution and its author. In the *Literary Gazette*, the Soviet writers Fedin, Kaverin, Slonimsky, Nikulin, Prokofiev, and others, in recording their impressions, punctuate them with pauses whenever their vocabulary fails them, or break into verse when mere prose becomes unworthy of the theme. "It must be spoken of in verse"—Prokofiev begins his article—"Stalin

I say to the universe . . Stalin . . . and I add nothing

everything is included in this titanic name. Everything: the Party, our country, life, love, immortality, everything." On the whole, all these dithyrambs, all these clouds of incense reflect the stifling moral atmosphere prevailing in the U.S.S.R. even after the publication of the "most liberal of all Constitutions," rather than the real attitude of the masses towards Stalin's Constitution.

Stalin Glorified by the Komintern

Yet the hymns in honour of Stalin are trumpeted not only in his own country, but also outside the boundaries of the U.S.S.R.

The VIIth Congress of the Communist International, which met in July 1935 at Moscow, officially proclaimed Stalin "leader of the international proletariat and of all the oppressed." The address presented to him on this occasion, on behalf of sixty-five Communist parties all over the world, must have been drafted by Stalin's entourage, so clearly can the practised hand of Moscow be discerned in all its details. "On behalf of the toilers of all countries we address ourselves to thee, our Leader; to thee, the Leader of the international proletariat, and of all the oppressed. Thou hast taught and art still teaching us Communists. In the struggle against the Trotskyists-Zinovievists-counter-revolutionaries, in the struggle against the right-wing and left-wing opportunists, thou, comrade Stalin, hast upheld the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Thou hast made it the foundation stone of a new era of world revolution which will be forever known as the era of Stalin. We assure thee, comrade Stalin, etc."[2]

1 See all the numbers of *Pravda* for the end of November and beginning of December 1936.

2 *Pravda*, July 26, 1935.

Behind those sixty-five representatives of parties affiliated to the *Komintern* may be a considerable number of the "rank-and-file of the international proletariat." But it is certain that members of individual Communist Parties cannot know that under Stalin's rule Russia has become more than ever a country of "façades and signboards," to use an expression of the Marquis de Custine, who visited Russia under Nicholas I. The great majority of them sincerely believe that the Soviet Union has realized the great ideals of Socialism, genuine fraternity and equality, actual and complete democracy.

Official Phraseology Falsifies Popular Feelings

In the U.S.S.R. also there are, of course, people who are sincerely anxious to see in Stalin "the leader of all the oppressed." But are they numerous?

In the course of his reign, Stalin has received countless addresses of welcome from factory workers. They all follow the same pattern, and betray the guiding hand of the watchful party machine.

While Stalin was showing no solicitude for human beings, and was concerned only with technical achievements even at the cost of numberless workers' lives, he was overwhelmed by countless letters expressing the workers' devotion. Yet no sooner had he delivered his well-known speech in May 1935, stating that industrial development must not cause losing sight of the human factor, than the party machinery was set in motion to propagate the new slogan, and a new series of enthusiastic greetings began pouring in from all sides.[1] Were the workers sincere when they praised extreme industrialization, or when they welcomed the new declarations about the human factor? Or were they rather not as little sincere in the one case as in the other?

To an even greater degree, the toeing of the party line is apparent in countless greetings addressed to Stalin by the peasants, in which, using the same stereotyped terms dictated from above, they praise the attractions of *kolkhoze* life and the advantages of collective farm-

1 "We realize very well the enormous importance of comrade Stalin's new slogan: 'The cadres decide everything.' We promise to struggle and toil so as to be worthy of the care and affection of our great Leader. We warmly welcome thee, our wise Master and Vozhd, Comrade Stalin." (*Pravda*, May 7, 1935.) Such was the resolution of a meeting of workers of the Fraiseur Plant. Thousands of resolutions were drafted after the same pattern, for the party workers toil hard at their task.

ing. The latter is not however the result of an organic evolution, but of ruthless coercion. The *kolkhozes* cannot possibly be in harmony with the mentality or individual economic interests of the many millions of peasants, whatever may be the correctives recently introduced into their organization.

In the complete absence of all freedom of speech and of the Press, it is impossible for an outside observer to decide, in any particular case, whether the adoration offered to the Leader is really sincere or a calculated exhibition of base servility. But it must be remembered that the Soviet Government constantly assures its people—and sometimes not without success so far as the man in the street is concerned—that in "capitalist" countries the workers live a harder life than in the U.S.S.R., and that Soviet achievements surpass by far anything accomplished elsewhere. The peoples of the Soviet Union are blindfolded, and all that goes on in the West is hidden from them as by a wall. This facilitates the absolute control exercised by Stalin over the destinies of these "blind" men, and even enables him to influence their minds up to a certain point. As to himself, he seems convinced that his unparalleled self-advertising campaign does win for him the sincere admiration of his subjects. The increasing number of the hymns of praise sung to him is an indication in his own estimation of the increasing growth of his power in the country. Perhaps, also, in reading and listening every day to the innumerable eulogies addressed to him, the Leader involuntarily hypnotizes himself. However great may be his native self-confidence, all this incense-burning might inspire in him a still greater faith in his personal genius and infallibility.

The Difference Between Lenin's and Stalin's Dictatorship

If Stalin's dictatorship differs materially from Lenin's in its outward form, its dissimilitude in substance is no less important.

After the November *coup d'état*, it was impossible for the central organs of the Party to direct effectively and regularly the activities of the revolutionary elements of the country. Only the local Bolshevik bodies were in a position to guide the men and shape local events. In the absence of a definite unique direction they were left to act at their own discretion. It was only in the second half of 1918 that Lenin began to implant "centralism" by compelling the various Soviets—in whose favour he had demanded "all the power"

—to comply with the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party. However, at Lenin's death, the local Soviets were still arguing about his watchword—"autodetermination to the point of separation"—to exercise a certain independent action: their submission to the central organs of the Party was only in course of realization. Parallel with this progressing subordination of the Soviets to the Party, its central organs—still in Lenin's lifetime—had, in their turn, to submit gradually to the will of the Leader. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" soon gave place to that of the Party, and the latter to that of one man.

Lenin undoubtedly was vested with dictatorial power. But his personal will was in a certain sense restrained by the higher organs of the Party, in the first place by the Central Committee. It was also bound—so to speak—by the general spirit of the first Soviet period. For, however great may have been the prestige and authority enjoyed by Lenin, he did not simply command an obedient and timorous personnel, but had to do with comrades with whom he argued and who did not always agree with him. The "Old Guard" of Bolshevism which formed Lenin's immediate entourage and composed the Political Bureau—men like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsky, and Stalin himself—exercised a certain influence over their leader's policy. There was a further factor which acted as a kind of brake on Lenin's absolutely dictatorial power. Possessing as he did almost limitless authority in the Communist Party which ruled Russia, Lenin could carry out any reforms he thought fit. He made these changes unflinchingly, through the agency of his faithful colleagues, and never shrank from the most sanguinary measures. Still, on his own initiative he imposed a self-restraining influence in his urge towards the socialization of Russia, for he was fully aware that, beyond certain limits, the laws of organic evolution could not be violated with impunity. He sometimes even retreated before the obstacles he encountered, as he did when he substituted the *N.E.P.* for War Communism. Needless to say, Lenin never dreamt of collectivizing twenty-five million peasant farms, as Stalin did.[1] The transition to collective forms of production was, in Lenin's view, to be spread over decades, and he meant to achieve this change "without bloodshed" (to use his own expression), by the force of example and by persuasion, never by coercion. In Stalin's case, on the contrary, all sense of proportion has vanished. He is always

1 Bukharin, *Lenin's Political Testament*, pp. 16, 18, etc.

prepared to conduct the most dangerous experiments on the quivering body of his country, and he never hesitates to use his autocratic power to coerce the people and inflict the greatest sacrifices upon them.

It would be obviously false to pretend that Stalin holds his position as "Secretary-General," or "First Secretary," as he is now designated in the Communist Party, by virtue of a fair election. As Bernard Shaw has observed, he was appointed not by man but by Nature herself. He needs no sanction, no confirmation, no advisers. All he requires is a staff to obey his behests and to comply with his "general" instructions. Stalin actually secured an absolute majority in all the leading organs of the Party and became *ex-officio* Secretary-General. His election is pure fiction, the result of the vote being a foregone conclusion, and his power is subject to no written or unwritten law. Neither within nor without Russia does anyone dispute its absolute character. The world Press, including, of course, the Russian, was therefore unanimous in concluding that the Draft Constitution prepared by Stalin would be automatically adopted. Indeed, the discussion of its text by the VIIIth All-Union Congress of the Soviets was a pure formality.

In 1925 Polonsky, a delegate to the XIVth Congress of the Communist Party, tried to analyse during the Congress "the struggle for power" which had been proceeding since Lenin's death in the leading Communist circles. He said, among other things, that "Among his bequests, comrade Lenin left a large box full of clothes. Various people try to put on his 'caftan,' but no one is big enough to wear it. This legacy ought to come to our Party as a whole, to the whole of the Central Committee. Let no one stretch out his arm in an attempt to seize it for himself. No one is of the stature to wear Lenin's 'caftan.' "[1] Many people at the time thought, like Polonsky, that there was not a single man in the entire Party worthy to succeed to Lenin. Yet the very Congress at which Polonsky openly expressed that opinion formed one of the principal stages in Stalin's progress towards dictatorship.

In passing to Stalin, Lenin's "caftan" certainly did not fall on the shoulders of the most authoritative exponent of the Communist doctrine, but rather on those of the most skilful political intriguer and the most determined character in the Party. It descended on one in whom an absence of general culture was combined with a pronounced practical flair of a son of the soil.

1 *Verbatim Report of the XIVth Congress of the Communist Party*, vol. i, p. 173.

It is not so long since Stalin's rapid advance in the party hierarchy puzzled some of his closest colleagues; yet even those who considered him no more than a clever wirepuller have assisted in his rise to the dignity of "the great Leader," of "the leader of genius."

Stalin's First Successes

For a long time Stalin was confined to a minor role within the Party. The work he did then, although useful, was limited to purely material execution. The first biographical notices referring to him in Bolshevik literature merely mention his numerous banishments and escapes. The first historians of the Party appear to ignore him. Lunacharsky, in his *Revolutionary Silhouettes*, does not even mention Stalin's name. Nor does it figure in the first ten volumes of Lenin's *Works*, and when it makes its appearance in the succeeding volumes it is only perfunctorily, or merely in footnotes.[1] To judge by the scanty nature of the biographical data relating to Stalin, published for the first time on behalf of the Communist Party in the Appendix to Lenin's *Collected Works*, the leading personalities of the Party did not foresee his impending rapid rise for quite a long time after the November Revolution of 1917.[2]

It is therefore all the more surprising to note that such a comparatively inconspicuous member of the Party as Stalin could, in so short space of time, become one of Lenin's close collaborators and remain so almost until Lenin's death. It was on Lenin's advice

1 The Police Department of the old régime also has under-estimated Stalin. The file which was kept in the police archives about him—or rather Dzhugashvili, for Stalin is a pseudonym, just as Lenin's real name was Ulianov and Trotsky's Bronstein—was published in 1918. One of the documents contains the following information: "Dzhugashvili, I. V., peasant of the Tiflis district, Orthodox, accountant. Sent on the decision of the Ministry of the Interior to Solvychegodsk to live under police supervision for two years, beginning with September 29, 1908. Escaped. Deported later on to the Government of Vologda; also escaped on February 29, 1912. Deported, on the decision of the Ministry of the Interior to the Narym Region, under police supervision for three years, beginning June 8, 1912, escaped on September 1, 1912." Such were the beginnings of Stalin's revolutionary career. They scarcely foreshadowed the brilliant advancement of the present-day ruler of the Soviet Union.

2 Yet this information dates from 1923, when Stalin has been for more than a year elected Secretary-General of the Communist Party, member of the Central Executive Committee, and head of the Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. In 1923 Stalin was unquestionably an important person, but he was still far from ranking among the highest of the Party. At this time official biographical notices spoke not only in more detail, but with greater sympathy and affection, of the other leaders of Bolshevism, of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, those future unsuccessful rivals of Stalin in the struggle for Lenin's "caftan."

that the Central Committee of the Party co-opted Stalin in 1912. In the same year, and again at Lenin's wish, Stalin was made a member of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party, which was specially created to lead the revolutionary activities of the Bolsheviks inside Russia. In July 1917, after evading arrest on the failure of the armed Bolshevik revolt in St. Petersburg, Stalin was the man entrusted by Lenin to uphold his conviction (at the VIth Congress of the Party) that it was essential to seize power immediately. On October 23, 1917, during the decisive meeting of the Central Committee of the Party, which voted for an armed insurrection against the Provisional Government, it was again Stalin who, at Lenin's side and on his instructions, spoke with great energy.

Towards the middle of 1918, when, as a result of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, many members of the Central Committee quarrelled with Lenin, it was Sverdlov and Stalin who, in association with Lenin, formed the all-powerful triumvirate which ruled the country and the Party dictatorially during the civil war.[1]

What were the qualities which made Lenin take Stalin into his confidence and thereby strengthen the latter's prestige in the eyes of the Party? Least of all, no doubt, his gifts as a theoretician. It was only after his triumph that Stalin was recognized as an ideologist of the party. What he wrote before his rise totally lacks originality. During the four years of his enforced stay in the Turukhansk region, whither he was banished in 1913, and where the Imperial authorities managed to prevent his escaping that time, Stalin did not write a single line that can be traced, while this pre-revolutionary period was brimming with events of world significance.[2]

Stalin as Lenin's Shadow

When, after the Revolution of March 1917, the Provisional Government recalled Stalin from Siberia in company with others

1 Stalin subsequently sought to show that his merits had been recognized by Lenin as early as 1903, when, living in exile in Siberia, he received from Lenin a few words of encouragement which stimulated his revolutionary and Communist enthusiasm. This claim certainly is not consistent with the facts. It was at the Bolshevik conference at Tammerfors, in December 1905, that Lenin for the first time heard of Stalin's existence. There is no doubt, however, that Lenin picked Stalin out from the ranks of the Party several years before the November Revolution.

2 Trotsky, to whom such a self-imposed silence would have been intellectually impossible, is positive that between 1913 and 1917 Stalin must have commented on such burning questions as those of the War, the International, and the Revolution, and that he himself subsequently preferred to destroy his writings.

exiled by the Imperial régime, Lenin was more than once riled by his speeches, for Stalin had returned from his exile with views favouring national defence. But after being called to order by Lenin he hastened to echo his teacher's opinions. On the very eve of the Bolshevik *coup d'état,* Stalin still tried to negotiate a compromise between the partisans of an immediate Socialist revolution and those who regarded a Socialist experiment in Russia doomed to failure in the absence of a proletarian revolution in the West. In this case, again an order from Lenin was sufficient to recall him to modesty and obedience. In the first years which followed the November Revolution, the ideological part played by Stalin still continued to be inconspicuous.[1]

In short, Stalin's place was in the shadow of Lenin, and the part he played was silently to carry out his orders. He was a real find for a man like Lenin, who sought to achieve the unity of the Party even by crushing and humiliating its members, and who only relied on his own opinion. Lenin detected in Stalin not only a man loyal to himself but also one whose obedience would make him go any lengths and stop at nothing. It is not in vain that Stalin's revolutionary record comprised such a sensational exploit as the armed "expropriation" carried out in June 1907 in the very centre of Tiflis, when a sum of 340,000 roubles belonging to the Treasury was seized while it was being taken to the bank. Three members of the military escort were killed and 50 wounded, while the assailants succeeded in escaping safely with their booty. This Tiflis "expropriation," the most important and most murderous of all similar attacks which occurred in 1906 and 1907, was carried out under Stalin's immediate directions. It drew the attention of the principal Bolshevik leaders towards him for the first time. His "fighting" past, his docility, and his determination made him that perfect type of "the professional revolutionary" without whom, according to Lenin, the Party could not even dream of victory.

In 1922 Lenin was beginning to be seriously concerned at the opposition, both active and latent, which he saw arising in the Party, and it is not difficult to understand the reasons

1 Even after he was placed at the head of the Commissariat for Nationalities, Stalin preferred to avoid the responsibility of making important decisions whenever this was possible. Pestkovsky, who was his collaborator at the time, says in his *Memoirs* that Stalin was in the habit of rising and leaving the meeting, saying, "I'll go out for a moment," whenever a thorny question was raised, and was seen no more.

which prompted him to propose Stalin for the post of Secretary-General.

The speeches to which he listened at the XIth Congress of the Party in March 1922 convinced Lenin that he was still far from achieving that organic unity which he was ever bent on imposing. Despite his personal demand, the Congress refused to decree the exclusion of members of the opposition—Shliapnikov, Medvedev, and Kollontai—whom Lenin regarded as undesirable. It very nearly abolished the Control Commissions which Lenin regarded as essential for the preservation of uniform tactics and doctrine within the Party.

Stalin, Secretary-General of the Party

In these circumstances, Lenin decided to devote all his energy to a drastic reorganization of the party secretariat, for he had always held that "the key to the situation lies in picking out the right men." Before 1922 it was the duty of the secretariat of the Central Committee to select the most suitable candidates for the different party posts from among the party workers, and to scrutinize the credential of Congress delegates. The party secretariat then consisted of three members, all of whom—Krestinsky, Preobrazhensky, and Serebriakov—lacked authority, and their proposals were not always accepted by the Central Committee. In order to obviate this Lenin induced the Congress to create the post of Secretary-General of the Party, which would carry with it the right to appoint and to depose the holders of different offices up to provincial secretaries inclusively. Believing Stalin to be the most devoted of his followers, he entrusted him with this immense responsibility.

This was the turning-point in Stalin's political career. Until then, he had been known chiefly in the leading circles of the Party where, however, he was not regarded as a very great politician. Henceforth he became widely known throughout the Party, and especially among the lesser committees. As an old "underground" revolutionary[1] Stalin, in order to infuse new blood into the Party and the Soviet administration, chose by preference old "illegal" party workers who, like himself under the old régime, had acquired good

1 This name was used to designate the hunted existence of those "professional revolutionaries," clandestine agitators, often escaped exiles, living under assumed names, and possessing false passports. In constant danger of being detected, they were doomed to lead what was, on the whole, a quite abnormal existence.

"credentials" through deportation. Lenin, on the contrary, had but seldom entrusted these old pre-revolutionary party workers with any important functions. It suffices to compare the lists of delegates who took part in the Bolshevik congresses prior to 1917 with those of the period immediately following the Revolution in order to realize that the old "underground heroes" were debarred from any authority under Lenin, even when they exercised an undeniable influence on the working masses locally. But having become Secretary-General, Stalin placed them in increasing numbers in the administrative posts. By appointing them to the secretarial offices in the provincial and district committees, and by securing their election to the Central Committee and to the Central Control Commission of the Party, he laid the foundations of his personal power.

Thus began the rise of Stalin, the outcome of lengthy and meticulous work. It is difficult to say from what exact moment these efforts of Stalin became governed by a methodical scheme with a definite object in view. It may be assumed that, at first, Stalin merely sought to obtain practical results in the performance of his immediate daily duties. When, however, the small initial successes led to bigger results, he must have acquired the conviction that he could rise in due time to heights he had not even dreamt of formerly.

Lenin was the first to detect this change in Stalin, and to note the greater independence he began to display. At the end of 1922, when he recovered from his first illness, he drew attention to the fact that "comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has concentrated enormous power in his hands."[1]

Stalin at the XIVth Congress of the Party

Lenin's closest collaborators did not grasp immediately the true import of the cautious methodical work by which Stalin was preparing his rise. They belonged to the "Old Guard" of Bolshevism,

1 In the "Testament" which he composed not long before his death, Lenin thought it necessary to warn the Party for the first time against Stalin's dominating spirit, and even to advise his removal from the post of Secretary-General. In his book *On the Opposition* (p. 723) Stalin admits the fact of Lenin's initiative in this direction. It is, however, possible that it was merely a result of Lenin's great power of intuition. He saw what was still hidden from the others, and was beginning the struggle against this eventual political rival in good time. It is quite possible that death alone saved Lenin from clashing with Stalin. According to Trotsky, Lenin's widow said as early as in 1926, in the course of a conversation with some Left Oppositionists: "If Lenin were alive, he would probably already be in prison." (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, 1937, p. 94.)

and, after Lenin's death, were inclined to treat Stalin somewhat condescendingly. When illness obliged Lenin to give up the direction of State affairs, the first place in the Central Committee devolved upon Zinoviev. To please him, Stalin's suggestions were often rejected, and in 1923, at the XIIth Congress of the Party, the powers of the Secretary-General came very near to be reduced.

For a long time Stalin avoided the slightest appearance of conflict with the "Old Guard," and even refrained from adopting any attitude of principle on the most burning issues. But he continued systematically to fill provincial Party and Soviet vacancies with his henchmen, and the latter did likewise within their own respective spheres. The central organs of the Party (the Central Committee, the Central Control Commission, and the Political Bureau) were filled more and more with Stalin's supporters, and, from 1925 onwards, he controlled a majority in those bodies.

In this way Stalin, for a time, substituted his own policy of manipulating the secret mainsprings of the party to that of Lenin's tactics of the "fist." The moment was to come when he was able to employ both methods simultaneously.

In December 1925, at the XIVth Congress of the Party, Stalin was able to win a new and important victory. He already controlled a majority in the Central Committee, and now the latter appointed him as its reporter to the Congress. This was the first occasion on which he figured as the official spokesman of the Party in a position which involved great responsibility. This fact infuriated the "Old Guard," and they launched an open attack upon him.

But it came too late in the day. Moreover, the weapon which Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky used against Stalin, of conducting propaganda among the members of the Party and rallying them for common action, was becoming less effective. Stalin, being now at the head of the Party and Soviet administration, an attack in this shape could scarcely alarm him.

Different representatives of Lenin's "Old Guard"—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov and others—vainly sought at the XIVth Congress of the Party to reform the secretariat and remove Stalin from his post. The delegates, carefully selected by the secretaries of the local Party committees, refused to listen to any such suggestions.[1]

1 It was in vain that Kamenev pleaded: "We are against creating the theory of a leader. We are against the secretariat having a hold both on the policy and the organization and thus becoming above the Party's Political Bureau. . . . We

Stalin had already secured the confidence of the majority in the leading party councils. The state of mind of the Congress was most clearly expressed by one of Stalin's satellites, Kuibyshev: "Comrade Stalin, who is the Secretary-General of our Party, is the man who has succeeded in grouping around him the best elements of the Party and in drawing them into our work. . . . Such a Secretary-General is what the Party must have in order to go from one victory to another."

It was at the XIVth Congress of the Party that Stalin disclosed the weapon on which he would rely to rout his enemies at a critical juncture. It was neither Lenin's logic, nor his vigorous personality, but simple electoral arithmetic, the counting of votes, tested in advance by the Secretary-General of the Party and his loyal supporters.

During the same XIVth Congress Stalin came forward with a very important declaration of principle. Later on it helped to transmute the confidence which the leading circles of the Party had reposed in him at the time of the above Congress, into the blind faith of the Communist rank and file.

Since their accession to power, the Bolsheviks had lived through more than one period of grave anxiety arising from all kinds of difficulties, and they had even considered the necessity of surrendering their power. Occasionally, even the upper circles of the Party were a prey to panic. Trotsky himself had declared more than once that "the Soviet Government is hanging by a thread" and that "the cuckoo has already tolled its knell."[1] It was in such an atmosphere that Lenin inaugurated his New Economic Policy. In 1923, at the XIIth Congress of the Party, Krassin said that leading Communists were constantly discussing the necessity of relinquishing power.[2] By 1925 all Stalin's adversaries had been infected by this panic. They realized that the world revolution was not in the making; that, on the contrary, the revolutionary movement abroad had

have come to the conclusion that comrade Stalin cannot fulfil the function of the unifier of the Bolshevik general staff." It was in vain that the oppositionists' views were supported by Krupskaia, the widow of the "great" Lenin, who complained of the existence of "a secretariat vested with enormous powers which enables it to remove party workers from their posts, and which actually enjoys an unlimited authority." These and similar complaints resulted merely in enthusiastic ovations for Stalin, and in his complete triumph. (*Verbatim Report of the XIVth Congress of the Party*, pp. 99, 224, 275, 334, 335, 413, etc.)

1 Stalin, *Articles and Addresses*, p. 492.

2 *Verbatim Report of the XIIth Congress of the Party*, p. 119.

suffered a number of set-backs between 1923 and 1925; and that therefore the Russian Revolution had not received the help from the West upon which it had relied.[1] It was against this attitude that Stalin raised his voice at the XIVth Congress. He challenged it outright, and for the first time suggested the possibility of "building up Socialism in one country." "Those who have lost faith in our cause," he said, "are liquidators. Of course, the sooner we receive help from the West the better . . . but even without foreign assistance we need not despair. We shall not abandon our task; we shall not be frightened by difficulties. Let those who are tired, who are afraid of obstacles, who hesitate, give way to those who have kept their courage and resolution. . . We have shown, we have proved, that the working class which has overthrown the bourgeoisie and has seized power is capable of reconstructing capitalist society on the basis of Socialism."[2]

Stalin Routs the "Opposition Bloc" and the "Right-Wing Opposition"

Stalin had hardly uttered the slogan of "building up Socialism in one country" than it provoked violent reaction among the "Left-Wing Opposition" led by Trotsky,[3] who in 1926 was joined by two other well-known Bolsheviks, Zinoviev and Kamenev.

1 In his book, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky ascribes the failure of the international revolutionary movement to the following events: "The crushing of the Bulgarian insurrection and the inglorious retreat of the German workers in 1923; the collapse of the Estonian attempt at insurrection in 1924; and the treacherous liquidation of the general strike in England; . . . the installation of Pilsudski (in Poland) in 1926; the terrible massacre of the Chinese Revolution in 1927 and the . . . ominous recent defeats in Germany and Austria." He imputes to the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy a large share of responsibility for those failures. (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, London, 1937, p. 91.)

2 *Verbatim Report of the XIIth Congress of the Party*, p. 55.

3 According to its leader Trotsky, the "Left-Wing Opposition" came into being in 1923. Its birth had been provoked by certain "undesirable" consequences of the *N.E.P.* In the spring of 1923, at the XIIth Congress of the Party, which Lenin was unable to attend through illness, Trotsky, in his report, drew attention to the growing disparity between the prices of industrial commodities and those of agricultural produce, a disparity which was known under the name of "the scissors." He asserted that should industrial development proceed slowly, the "scissors" would open more and more, and a cleavage between the towns and the villages would become inevitable. In his opinion, the policy of the *N.E.P.* and the slogan connected with it: "Let us face the villages," amounted to a surrender to capitalism, and to the enrichment of a few people, such as *kulaks*, at the expense of the great popular masses. (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 31–33, 36.)

After their defeat in 1925, in their struggle against Stalin for supremacy in the Party, they decided to resume the conflict on a different issue: that of the ideology and of the programme. With a view to combined action against Stalin's policy, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky were then joined by other opposition groups previously existing in the Party.[1] Thus was formed, in 1926, the "Opposition Bloc" which played quite an important part in the life of the Party. The Government coalition—Stalin, Molotov, Rykov, and Tomsky, as well as Zinoviev and Kamenev, who had not yet joined Trotsky—had been fighting the Left-Wing Opposition ever since 1923. But after the formation of the "Bloc" the struggle assumed a particularly virulent character, for now it was power itself that was at stake. In addition to Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky, the Opposition Bloc comprised many well-known Bolsheviks, including Radek, Rakovsky, Piatakov, Smilga, Safarov, Smirnov, Serebriakov, Lashevich, Muralov, Evdokimov, Zalutzky, and others. It tried to utilize the elections to party posts in an effort to remove Stalin from his position of Secretary-General and thus deprive him of power, as Lenin had advised in his "Testament."

On ideological grounds all the members of the Opposition Bloc were unanimous in thinking that it was impossible to "build up Socialism in one country." Trotsky had been the first to express that opinion as early as 1906.[2] He continued to maintain it and opposed it to Stalin's slogan of "Socialism in one country" which he considered "reactionary." "The longer the Soviet Union remains in a capitalist environment, the deeper runs the degeneration of the social fabric. A prolonged isolation would inevitably end . . . in a restoration of capitalism."[3] Trotsky considered that the path followed by Stalin in the execution of his new programme was inevitably leading to the failure of all the achievements of the November Revolution. He thus defines Stalin's ideas at that time: "Not to hurry with industrialization, not to quarrel with the *muzhik* (peasant), not to count on world revolution, and above all to protect the power of the party bureaucracy from criticism!"

1 The old opposition groups which entered the Opposition Bloc were the "Workers' Opposition" and the group of "Democratic Centralism." Both of these had formulated their demands during Lenin's lifetime. The former wanted "democracy within the Party" and the granting of a more prominent role to the trade unions; the latter advocated the slogan "All power to the Soviets."

2 Trotsky, *Our Revolution*, 1906.

3 Id., *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 284.

This attitude of Stalin "expressed unmistakably the mood of the bureaucracy. When speaking of the victory of Socialism, they (the bureaucrats) meant their own victory."[1]

To Stalin's programme the Opposition Bloc opposed a policy based on the anticipated triumph of the world revolution which it held to be inevitable, in spite of its delay. Basing himself on this first principle, Trotsky demanded that in its foreign policy the Party should by every means support the Communist Parties of Europe and America in their efforts to seize power; and, in its home policy, seek to establish a close contact between socialized industry and the small peasant farms which still continued to exist as private undertakings. At the same time, he proposed the creation of a Socialist agricultural sector. In practice, Trotsky's home policy amounted, on the one hand, to speeding up industrialization, especially as regards the production of articles for general consumption for workers and peasants; and, on the other, to putting pressure on the *kulaks* and encouraging the collective forms of agriculture.

For a long time Stalin confined himself to rejecting Trotsky's programme wholesale, and to deriding his opponents' international attitude as a "vulgar revolutionary game." The XVth Conference of the Party, lasting from October 26 to November 3, 1926, endorsed his views, and passed a resolution denouncing the "practical platform" of the Opposition Bloc, accusing it of "giving up the Marxist analysis of events," of "not taking account of the correlation of forces between the classes involved in the Revolution," of "falling a prey to the 'ultra-left' illusions," and of "favouring a policy of insurrection." Stalin's attitude with regard to the internal policy of the Opposition Bloc was no less emphatic. He described it as a "jump into the unknown." It was only in 1928 that the presence of *kulaks* in the villages began to disturb him. As regards the intensified industrialization of the country, Stalin declared in April 1927, at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee, that the construction of the Dneprostroi works was to be compared with the purchase by a peasant of a gramophone instead of a cow.

Thus, on many points, there were wide divergences between Stalin's attitude and that of the Opposition Bloc. The leading organs of the Party had to choose between the two, for it was impossible to reconcile them. Consequently, Stalin must have attached a special value to every additional ally whom he could win over to his side

1 Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 38 and 276.

within the Central Committee. Now such eminent Communists as Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky, who were sworn foes of Zinoviev and Kamenev, did their utmost to prevent the leaders of the Opposition Bloc from securing any share in the direction of the Party and the State, although they were very non-committal concerning the possibility of establishing "Socialism in one country alone." On this particular issue they shared Trotsky's view. This circumstance, without any doubt, rendered Stalin's position still more difficult.

Of course, neither Bukharin, Rykov, nor Tomsky denied, on principle, that it was necessary to strive to transform the U.S.S.R. into a Socialist State. They thought, however, that the path which the Russian villages would have to tread to Socialism "would be very long considering the backward condition of our technique and economics. . . . The old habits and old methods of working are so firmly rooted in the people that it is impossible to break them all at once."[1] All three believed that nothing permanent could be gained in this sphere by force, and that a policy of extreme caution should be followed. According to Trotsky, these three were inclined to encourage "the capitalist tendencies in the villages" and wanted "to form a 'connection' not between peasant economy and socialist industries, but between the *kulak* (or rich peasant) and world capitalism. It was not worth while to make the November Revolution for that."[2]

It is easy to see, even through Trotsky's biased estimation, that, in the controversy around the programme of the Opposition Bloc, the difference between Stalin, on the one hand, and Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky on the other, related to the rate of progress towards Socialism rather than to the principle itself. With some pliancy Stalin could fairly easily find common ground with them. This is what happened apparently. Stalin succeeded in convincing Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky that his conception of "Socialism in one country" was not greatly dissimilar from theirs. In the circumstances, they agreed to the expulsion from the Party of all the members of the Left-Wing Opposition. By the resolution of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, dated November 14, 1927, the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev was decreed. A few weeks later the XVth Congress of the Party (December 2 to 19, 1927)—in which Stalin had beforehand made sure of having the

1 Bukharin, *The Way to Socialism and the Union of Workers and Peasants*, pp. 31 and 39.
2 Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 36.

majority of votes—finally destroyed the Opposition Bloc by pronouncing the wholesale expulsion of seventy-five of its members, including Kamenev. On the other hand, the Congress passed the resolution that in the "plans" of economic construction it was "necessary to avoid the danger of immobilizing too large State funds in great works of construction, the products of which could not be marketed for many years to come." As regards agriculture, the Congress pronounced that the transition of the small farmers to large-scale agriculture should be effected gradually, and by applying co-operative methods which would serve to group small holdings.

In accordance with this decision the *Gosplan* was instructed to elaborate a Five-Year Plan for the reconstruction of national economy at a slower rhythm.

Very soon, however, events proved that, having liquidated the Left-Wing Opposition, Stalin did not consider himself bound to Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky in matters of policy. Early in 1929, in place of the Five-Year Plan prepared by the *Gosplan*, he began to carry through another, which was obviously intended to be a "fighting" plan, comprising both the super-industrialization of the country and the forcible and "complete" collectivization of the villages. Thus, no sooner was the Opposition Bloc defeated than Stalin set a scheme working, more radical than the programme of his recent Left-Wing adversaries, which he himself had derided and denounced as a risky venture. It was now Trotsky's turn to describe Stalin's policy as "an adventure" and his new plan as "a destructive hurricane."[1]

1 When exactly Stalin took up the idea of using the programme of his Left-Wing opponents in order to build up "Socialism in one country" remains an open question. At any rate, the *Bulletin de l'Opposition*, organ of the "Leninist" Bolsheviks, has grounds for affirming that Stalin's plan of super-industrialization and thoroughgoing collectivization—however contradictory, chaotic, and purely bureaucratic in its methods of execution it may have been—has been pieced together from bits of the programme once advocated by the Left-Wing Opposition." (*Bulletin de l'Opposition*, Nos. 52–53, Paris, October 1936, p. 24.) Trotsky thinks that in July 1928 Stalin was voicing his real conviction of the moment when he said that "the way out of the situation lies in the revival of small and medium farming, which must be supported by every means." (*Izvestia*, July 16, 1928.) It is true that already previously, viz. in February 1928, Stalin had ordered the Press to start a campaign against the *kulaks*, and had even sent military detachments to the villages at the same time in order to seize the "surplus" of grain. Nevertheless, the Government described these measures as being only extraordinary and continued to affirm that its primary concern was the assistance of small and medium peasant farming. Whether Stalin had changed his programme at the end of 1927, or at the end of 1928, there is no doubt of his drastic change of front.

Once launched upon the path of "super-industrialization" and "thoroughgoing collectivization," all that Stalin retained of his old programme was the formula of "Socialism in one country." In practice, however, it now meant something distinctly different. As to Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky, they formed, with some other prominent members of the Central Committee, what was called "the Right-Wing Opposition." They realized that Stalin had broken his agreement with them, and was attempting to build up Socialism by methods that were quite unacceptable to them. While, during his struggle against the Opposition Bloc, Stalin had borrowed his arguments from the ideological arsenal of those who were afterwards to form "the Right-Wing Opposition," he now fought the latter with the weapons he borrowed from his Left-Wing antagonists. This new duel he fought comparatively easily and quickly.

At the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in November 1929 the Right-Wing Opposition was driven from the leadership of the Party and the government of the country, and entirely swept away. From this moment onwards Stalin's power was firmly established and met with no further opposition. This did not prevent the dictator afterwards from settling on more than one occasion his account with the former members of the Left- and Right-Wing Opposition, and time after time the punishment meted out to them became increasingly severe.

It took Stalin about three years (from 1926 to 1929) to suppress all independent activity on the part of the Bolshevik dignitaries. During this period, he learned not only to exercise his manœuvring talents, but also to make the oppositionists feel the strength of his "fist." This last proved to be even more formidable than Lenin's.

In Lenin's days the *Politbureau*—that political *élite* of the Central Committee—comprised Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsky, and Stalin. Under Stalin what became of those members of the *Politbureau* selected by Lenin? Trotsky was banished to Turkestan in January 1928, and, a year later, exiled from the U.S.S.R. For a long time after that he vegetated in Europe, finally finding refuge in Mexico. In Moscow he is invariably represented as a venomous emigrant, a counter-revolutionary, and a traitor. In 1929 and 1930, Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky (whom his friends called the Russian Bebel), were expelled from the *Politbureau* and the Central Committee and consigned to the background of the Party. Zinoviev, the former President of the *Komintern*, was sent to gaol for

ten years in 1935. In the same year Kamenev, whom Lenin substituted for himself as President of the Council of People's Commissars and whom, next to Rykov, he regarded as his most valuable assistant in the management of economic affairs, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

However, Stalin was not satisfied with this clean sweep of his opponents within the party.

Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Tomsky, who, with Lenin and Stalin, were the principal authors of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, became the victims of the sanguinary repression staged by the Soviet dictator in August 1936. Sixteen Bolsheviks, including some of the best-known, headed by Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Smirnov, were committed for trial (or rather, the parody of a trial). All the accused were found guilty of having attempted to organize a conspiracy against Stalin and his assistants, in collusion with Trotsky and the German Fascists, and were shot by the political police (*Gugobez*). At the same moment the Central Committee of the Communist Party officially announced that Tomsky, "having become entangled in dealings with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist and Zinovievist terrorists," had committed suicide on August 22nd at his house in Bolshevo. After the trial of 1936 Stalin alone remained of the "Leninist *Politbureau.*"

As time went on Stalin became impervious to the psychology of the old Bolsheviks; but on the other hand, he must have realized that, inwardly, they disapproved of his personal dictatorship. That is why he was no longer content with creating a new governing class and clearing all the higher posts in the State and party administration of the old Leninist Bolsheviks. He resolved now to fight the latter to their complete extermination. The result of this policy of Stalin's directed against his former opponents, whom he suspected of plotting to overthrow him, was the trial of "seventeen Trotskyists" in January 1937. Piatakov, Serebriakov, Muralov, Radek, and Sokolnikov in turn fell victims to his vengeance. The first three were sentenced to death and the other two to ten years' imprisonment. In the course of the trial it was made clear that Stalin's avenging hand was about to strike such prominent Bolsheviks as Bukharin, Rykov, and Rakovsky, and other survivors of the Old Guard, and at Stalin's wish both Bukharin and Rykov were expelled by the Central Committee at the beginning of 1937.

Lenin was aware of Stalin's passion for intrigue and dubbed him

a "master in concocting spicy dishes."[1] It must, however, be admitted, in all fairness to Stalin, that it was not only to his capacity as a wirepuller that he owed the initial successes that opened his path to dictatorship. It was mainly because he was quick to appreciate the importance of the party machine in the U.S.S.R., and how to subordinate it to his exclusive influence, and effectively utilize it to his own ends. After removing the principal representatives of the opposition in 1926 and 1927, he could rest assured that no obstacles now remained in his way and that nothing could stop him from becoming the real dictator of the Soviet Union. This, indeed, was not long in materializing.

Towards the beginning of 1930, the bureaucratic machine on whose absolute loyalty and devotion Stalin could rely, had grown to truly colossal proportions. Numerically speaking, this had no precedent in Russia. In 1914, on the eve of the War, there were about 800,000 officials. According to the information given by Boris Souvarine in his work on Stalin, and which seems an under statement, the Soviet army of bureaucrats in 1930 exceeded five millions.[2]

These figures are by no means exaggerated. No other régime requires so many offices and employees as that of "planned" economy, especially when nationalized. The French Communist, M. Yvon, who spent eleven years in the U.S.S.R., working his way from a simple workman to the director of a plant, and who had happened to live in several Soviet towns, gives a still higher estimate of the total of the bureaucratic personnel. "The growth of the class of minor employees is incredible: against 21,000,000 workers (not including the peasants) there are 8,000,000 employees."[3]

Final Consolidation of Stalin's Power

At the time of the XVIth Congress of the Party (June–July 1930) all dissentient voices were silenced. The Congress passed off without a hitch. Preappointed speakers delivered prearranged addresses punctuated at set intervals by "wild applause"; ready-made resolutions were unanimously passed, and at a carefully chosen moment, the gathering intoned the *Internationale*. The XVIth Party

1 Trotsky, *What Has Happened and How*, Paris, 1929, p. 28. *The Bulletin de l'Opposition*, published in Paris, stated in its issue for October 1936 (p. 7) that the "spiciest dishes are still to come."

2 Souvarine, *Staline*, Paris 1935, p. 475.

3 M. Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, Paris, 1936, p. 81.

Congress inaugurated the era of general submission to Stalin. The moral atmosphere of that assembly is best illustrated by the attitude of the former "oppositionists" who got to the tribune one after the other and, thumping their chests, publicly confessed their errors and "deviations" from the "general line." At this stage Stalin still preferred to kill his enemies only morally. Rakovsky, one of the foremost representatives of Lenin's Old Guard, writes: "It is difficult to say who had less sense of dignity left, those who bowed down humbly before the storm of booing and hissing in the hope for a better future, or those who insulted the defeated knowing beforehand that their opponents were at their mercy."

Stalin Strengthens his Power by Collectivization of Farming

By his victory over his rivals in Lenin's Old Guard, Stalin showed to the people, to the Party, and to himself, the magnitude of his power. This was revealed in a still more striking way when he dared to undertake the forcible collectivization of the countryside. The motives which drove Stalin to resort to that distressing reform are set forth in the succeeding chapter. One of the principal reasons for it was that the inordinate First Five Year Plan, such as it was conceived by Stalin, made it necessary to wring from the peasants the foodstuffs indispensable to ensure its realization. The alternative before Stalin was, either to abandon that Plan and return to the *N.E.P.*, or to proceed with the Plan at the cost of nationalized farming. Stalin firmly chose the second course. This involved tremendous risks, for the collectivization of farming was contrary to the interests of the peasants who form the vast majority of the population of the U.S.S.R. Stalin's collaborators hesitated. Nervously they weighed the odds against them. The failure of collectivization would inevitably lead to the downfall of the Communist Party. Stalin, however, had no fear. He carried his cynicism so far as to compare the cries of despair coming from the Russian villages to the noise "of a cockroach scurrying away." In 1930, he painted the following sarcastic picture of the Right Wing of the Party: "At the first sound of the cockroach, which has not yet even emerged from his hole, they hastily draw back in a panic, and howl, dreading catastrophe, the downfall of Soviet power. We pacify them and try to make them understand that there is no danger, that it is only a cockroach and they really need not be

afraid of it."[1] It was in such a psychological atmosphere as this that, certain of his success, Stalin carried out the forcible collectivization of peasant farming. When the crushed and terrorized peasants—driven by the collectivizers—were rushed to the *kolkhozes* Stalin felt all the elation of a great victory. He proclaimed that "there were no more fortresses left the Bolsheviks could not take." The crucial question of funds necessary for industrialization was answered: they were to be supplied by the subjugated peasantry. Now that "the average peasant has adhered to Socialism," anything can be done. The future depends only on the magnitude of the effort which the country could be induced to furnish, or, as Stalin put it at the time, "it was enough to exercise real will power."

Under these conditions Stalin came to be regarded as their prophet by all the countless Communist and non-Communist officials, civil and military administrators, secretaries of committees of every degree, directors of trusts, managers of factories and workshops, of Red professors and academicians, of chairmen of collective farms, etc.; in other words, by all those who sought to live within the orbit of power.

Stalin and the Bureaucratic Machine

In his work *My Life* Trotsky thus explains Stalin's rise to supremacy. "The ideas of the first period of the Revolution were gradually losing their hold on the minds of that section of the Party which actually ruled the country. . . . When the tension had relaxed, and the nomads of the Revolution had settled down, there reawoke in them, and grew and developed, the Philistine habits, preferences and tastes of self-satisfied officials. . . . After all, why should everything be always sacrificed to the Revolution; one should also consider one's own interests." In Trotsky's opinion, Stalin is the perfect embodiment of this "new type." "Stalinism means, first and foremost, the working of an anonymous mechanism during the decline of the Revolution," at the moment when "the opportunist began to release himself inside the Bolshevik's soul."[2] Nevertheless, the opportunist thus "released inside the Bolshevik's soul," although he has lost all reverence for Marx and Engels, cannot free himself from the slogans which once carried him into power.

When Trotsky published *My Life*, that is in 1930, it was evident

1 "The XVIth Congress of the Party," *Pravda*, July 8, 1930.

2 Translated by the author from the Russian text.

that Stalin largely personified the aims and aspirations of the new Sovietic bureaucracy. Owing to its numbers and organization, the vast army of officials powerfully contributed to place Stalin on the party throne and consequently on that of the country. As Trotsky has rightly said,[1] Stalin's idea of establishing Socialism in one country responded to the wishes of the young bureaucracy. The latter could not tolerate the belief that it would be compelled to wait for a world revolution before it could carry out its vast schemes and obtain full control of the country's economic destinies. The immediate establishment of Socialism in Russia was, in its estimation, a victory by which the bureaucrats would be the first to profit. As is generally the case in an exaggeratedly bureaucratic régime, the dictator, to a great extent, follows the governmental machine. This certainly continues to be true now also, but the bitter energy with which Stalin suppresses all signs of independence in the upper administrative circles clearly shows that he has no intention of letting them assume too much influence.

The Dominating Class in the U.S.S.R.

Whatever the relations between the Leader and the bureaucratic machine may be, it is none the less evident that the huge army of functionaries is the beneficiary of the régime and constitutes the dominating class in the U.S.S.R. The question as to who composes the new ruling class and what is the line separating its lower strata from the masses is difficult to answer precisely. But in a general manner it is easy roughly to define the elements constituting the bulk of it.

The political and economical administrators of the State (directors of trusts and factories, prominent engineers, etc.) are by no means the only prominent elements of the new dominating class. To them must be added Soviet scientists, authors, journalists, judges, and, above all, army and naval officers. For the land of the Soviets has travelled a long way since 1917 when Lenin—prior to his advent to power—demanded the abolition of the permanent professional army and the election of commanders by the whole population. Gone are the times when the mere terms "captain" and "colonel" aroused a storm of indignation. Nowadays captains and colonels have reappeared. The decree of September 22, 1935, ac-

1 Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed,* p. 276.

knowledges that, for the majority of officers, service in the army has become "a life-long profession" just as it is in bourgeois capitalist countries. The decree explains that "the great responsibility falling upon the commanding personnel as a whole requires the introduction of military ranks clearly denoting the qualifications of each high commander and officer, their experience and merits, their power and prestige." With this aim, the Central Executive Committee has instituted the ranks of lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, brigade, division and corps commanders, as well as the rank of "Marshal of the Soviet Union."[1] In other words, it has restored the military hierarchy which has long been in existence in all non-Socialist States. The comments of *Pravda* upon this decree intimates that the decision of the Central Executive Committee tends "to increase still further the role, the significance, and the prestige of the commanding personnel of the Red Army . . . At all times the commanding personnel of the army have belonged to the dominating class. Therefore," concludes *Pravda*, "Red Army commanders belong to the class which is the dominating class in the Soviet country."[2] Having boldly admitted that the Soviet captains, majors, colonels, and generals belong to the ruling class, *Pravda* specifies that "the dominating class is the proletariat." One may well ask whether this view would be endorsed by the managers of those "model" Soviet factories where the power of the management over the workmen has, as in the past, become unbounded.

To the dominating class also belong the so-called "order-bearers," people decorated as a reward with the Order of Lenin or of the Red Star, and entitled to great privileges as compared with the ordinary citizens of the U.S.S.R., in flagrant violation of Marx's teaching.

In short, the ruling class in the U.S.S.R. is numerous and varied. It shows conclusively the extent to which the old equalitarian watchwords have been rendered obsolete in the Soviet Union. At the same time, apart from a few sincere and disinterested enthusiasts, it constitutes the principal social mainstay of the power of the proletarian chief—Stalin. The whole economic and administrative mechanism of the vast country is in its hands. It is also they who pick up the best pieces which fall from the richly served table of the Soviet banquet. In his book, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky enumerates the following social strata in the U.S.S.R.: "Heads of the

1 *Izvestia*, November 21, 1935.

2 *Pravda*, September 23, 1935.

bureaucracy, specialists, etc., living in bourgeois conditions; medium and lower strata (of officials and specialists)—on the level of petty bourgeoisie; worker and collective farm aristocracy—approximately on the same level; medium working mass; medium stratum of collective farmers; individual (non-collectivized) peasants and craftsmen; lower worker and peasant strata passing over into 'lumpen-proletariat'; homeless children, prostitutes, etc."[1] The *Bulletin de l'Opposition*, the organ of the "Leninist" Bolsheviks, refers in the following terms to the existence of a very pronounced social differentiation in the U.S.S.R.: "Never before has the Soviet Union known an inequality comparable to that which now reigns, almost twenty years after the November Revolution. Salaries of 8,000 and 10,000 roubles are paid side by side with wages of 100 roubles. Some people live in barracks and wear worn-out shoes; others drive about in luxurious motor-cars and live in sumptuous flats. Some people have to toil hard to secure their own and their families' bare livelihood, while others, in addition to a motor-car, have servants, a country-house near Moscow and a villa in the Caucasus; and so on. Classes have been abolished, but what is there in common between the life of a trust manager and that of an unskilled workman; between that of a marshal of the U.S.S.R. and that of a *kolkhoze* peasant? Naturally a certain inequality is still inevitable at present; but the point is that this inequality increases from year to year and assumes monstrous forms; and that it is being paraded as . . . Socialism."[2]

The French Communist M. Yvon, who for eleven years has been helping to "build up" Socialism in the U.S.S.R., has arrived at the conclusion that all the official declarations about the "classless Soviet society" are contradicted by the facts of everyday life.[3] This

1 Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 230–231.

2 *Bulletin de l'Opposition*, No. 52, 53, Paris, October 1936.

3 *Pravda* (October 19, 1937) expresses, in the following table, the official point of view on the social distribution of population in the U.S.S.R.:

	1913 *Per cent*	1937 *Per cent*
Workers and employees	16·7	34·7
Kolhoze peasants, *kustari* and craftsmen grouped in co-operatives	—	55·5
Non-collectivized peasants (the *kulaks* excepted); toilers, *kustari* and craftsmen not grouped in co-operatives	65·1	5·6
Bourgeoisie (landowners, merchants, *kulaks*)	15·9	—
Other categories (school youth, pensioners, army, etc.)	2·3	4·2

is what he says: "There are classes in the U.S.S.R., privileged classes and exploited classes, the class of rulers, and the class of ruled. Between them there is a marked difference in the standard of living. . . . For some, palaces are erected in pleasant surroundings; for others, wooden barracks adjoining tool-sheds and oily machinery. It is always the same people who live in the palaces, and the same people who live in the barracks." As to the specialist . . . "what does it matter to him if, with each turn of the wheel of that social machinery, of which he holds one of the handles and which opens before him a vast field of activity and an unhoped-for future, large numbers of serfs who are at the bottom are crushed?" "The new classes feel that the future is theirs, to a still greater extent than the present. . . . For industrialization creates a constantly renewed and never satisfied demand for 'specialists' and 'responsible' officials. It increases their importance. More and more it becomes a rule that the son of the specialist becomes himself a specialist. For he has the advantage of a higher standard of living which makes him more fit to study . . . in addition to this his family has numerous connections, so that he will never lack protectors."[1]

It is also in this class, and especially among the numerous managers of industry, that the signs of "bourgeois degeneration" are manifested, which are so often stigmatized by the Bolshevik leaders.[2]

Thus, during twenty years of Bolshevik rule the administrative machinery of the State has been greatly consolidated. At the same time there has arisen a new dominating class whose interests are closely bound with the existence of the Soviet régime.

1 M. Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, pp. 82–85. The formation of new social classes in the U.S.S.R. is a clearly outlined process. It has not escaped the attentive eye of the French writer André Gide, until quite recently a sincere admirer of the Bolshevik experiment. This is what he writes about it in his book *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* (*Back from the U.S.S.R.*), published in 1936: "There are no more classes in the U.S.S.R., this goes without saying. But there are the poor. There are too many of them, much too many. I had hoped to see none any more, or, more exactly, it was in order not to see them any more that I went to the U.S.S.R." (p. 65). "I do not object to the inequality of wages; I grant that it was necessary. . . . But I am afraid that these differences, instead of being lessened, will go on increasing. I fear that soon a variety of the satisfied workers' bourgeoisie may come into being which will be too much like our own small bourgeosie" (p. 62). "This petty-bourgeois mentality, which I am afraid is tending to develop there, is to my mind deeply and essentially counter-revolutionary" (p. 66).

2 See, for instance, Kalinin's speech in *Red Star*, June 17, 1938.

Troops of "Special Destination" in the "Workmen's and Peasants' Army"

Being the undisputed master of the country's destinies, Stalin has seen to the securing of physical force, of the armed forces, on which his power rests. The organs of the political police, under the control of the Commissariat for the Interior, have at their disposal troops of "special destination," whose strength in 1936 was 280,000 men. Provided with first-rate technical equipment and with plenty of artillery, and enjoying greater material privileges than the rest of the army, these troops serve to protect the régime, to repress disturbances and riots, and to supervise concentration camps and compulsory labour undertakings. They call to mind the Roman praetorians, or rather the Turkish janissaries, and, together with the dreaded political police, provide the Soviet dictator with the "mailed fist," which ensures his personal security as well as the stability of the régime.

Moreover, Stalin does all in his power to transform the Red Army as a whole into a passive and obedient instrument in his hands. With this object in view he systematically reduces, in the army, the proportion of those social elements which, for some reason or other, might be hostile to the existing régime. In the course of the last ten years the social constituents of the army have undergone the following changes:

Years	*Workmen* *Per cent*	*Employees* *Per cent*	*Peasants* *Per cent*
1925	11·0	4·3	84·7[1]
1930	31·2	10·9	57·9[2]
1935	45·5	10·0	44·5[3]

The rapid fall in the percentage of peasants in the army, parallel with the increase in the percentage of workmen, is in flagrant contradiction to the respective numbers of those two groups in the country. The proportion of the workmen in the ranks of the army is four times greater than it is in the general population. This social composition of the military forces of the U.S.S.R. definitely con-

1 *Red Star* (*Krasnaya Zvezda*), May 22, 1925.

2 Marshal Voroshilov's speech delivered on January 30, 1934, at the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party.

3 Marshal Tukhachevsky's speech delivered on January 30, 1935, at the VIIth Congress of the Soviets.

tradicts its official designation as the "workmen's and peasants'" army. It testifies to the lack of confidence which the Leader has in the peasants who form the bulk of the population.

Simultaneously with the modification in its social formation, the army underwent a change just as rapid and as definite in its political composition. During the last ten years the number of Communists in it has increased as follows:

1925	19·0 per cent[1]
1930	34·3 ,, [2]
1935	49·3 ,, [3]

The motorized troops, in particular, are recruited exclusively from among the Communists. Here again it is necessary to emphasize that the enormous percentage of Communists in the ranks of the "workmen's and peasants'" army does not correspond at all to the numerical strength of the Party, which totalled in 1934 only 1,872,000 adherents.[4]

The Communist power used yet other means to strengthen its hold on the army. At the time of the civil war political Commissars had been introduced into the army to disseminate propaganda for revolutionary Socialism. As their presence creates a duality of power pernicious to the fighting strength of the army they were soon suppressed. However, they were recently re-established by virtue of a decree published on May 17, 1937, introducing military control councils for each military command and military commissions for each army unit. These are, in the first place, responsible for the "political atmosphere and morale of the army in a spirit of loyalty to the Soviet Government." Military

1 *The Military Messenger* (*Voenny Vestnik*), October 25, 1930.

2 Marshal Voroshilov's Report to the XVIth Congress of the Communist Party submitted on July 2, 1930.

3 Marshal Tukhachevsky's Report to the VIIth Congress of the Soviets submitted on January 30, 1935.

4 See in the chapter "Political and Economic Structure of the U.S.S.R.," p. 176.

In 1934 the permanent strength of the Red Army amounted to 562,000. (According to the information supplied to the Press by the Secretariat of the League of Nations on January 1, 1934.) In the next year it was raised to 940,000, and finally increasing to 1,300,000 in the beginning of 1936, according to a statement made by Marshal Tukhachevsky at the Central Executive Committee on January 15, 1936.

The Soviet decree of August 11, 1936, has lowered the conscription age and ordered the recruits of one and a-half classes to enlist every year between 1936 and 1939. The official explanation of this measure mentions the small numbers of the classes born between 1915 and 1919, years when the birth-rate had greatly fallen as a result of the Great War and the civil war. But the desire to increase, without too much ostentation, the army effectives in time of peace must have played some part in the adoption of this measure.

control councils are composed of the commanding officers of each military command and two other persons, who play the role of the dictator's "eyes." They are subordinated directly to the Commissariat for National Defence.

In case of mobilization, the social and political composition of the army would obviously undergo a profound change, inasmuch as it would have to absorb those social elements which the dictator seems to have grounds to fear. So long, however, as there is no foreign war the Red Army will probably remain a faithful instrument in the hands of the master of the Kremlin. Yet, while relying on the Red Army, the Soviet dictator still dreads the possibility of its high commanding officers making a show of independence and putting forward claims which might run counter to his intentions. Numerous officers undoubtedly desire the army to become a national force, and this must lead to a state of tension between them and the Communist leaders for whom the army can only be a servant of the Party. In May and June 1937 Stalin proceeded in feverish haste to make sudden and drastic changes in the high military command and the political control of the army. Gamarnik, who was in charge of this control, was driven to suicide; in the same month of June Stalin caused eight high army leaders, including Marshal Tukhachevsky, to be shot; in addition to the latter, during the following nine months, over fifty military chiefs, not counting numerous minor officers, were suppressed.[1] All this goes to prove that the dictator lives in perpetual fear for his life and power, and that he does not hesitate to sacrifice to his personal interests even that force which will be called upon to defend the U.S.S.R. against an external enemy.[2]

As long as Stalin's régime lasts, many circumstances in which Tukhachevsky and his seven colleagues were executed will be kept dark. The official explanation to be found in the Soviet Press is as follows: "These eight spies regularly supplied confidential information to the military circles of a foreign State; they committed criminal acts in order to undermine the strength of the Workmen's and Peasants' Red Army; they worked to prepare the defeat of the Red Army in the case of aggression against the U.S.S.R. They aimed to promote the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, and towards the restoration in the U.S.S.R. of the power of the land-

1 See the list contained in an article of M. Eccard in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of May 1, 1938.

2 Thus, for example, no hesitation was shown at the beginning of 1938 to sacrifice the famous aeroplane builder, Tupolev, to the suspicions of the dictator.

owners and capitalists."[1] A study of the leading organs of the European Press shows that this explanation has not satisfied anyone.[2] It is permissible to believe that even inside the U.S.S.R. to many people this version must have appeared, to say the least, improbable.

Finally, when mentioning the factors contributing to the stability of the Soviet régime, the force of inertia common to all established régimes should not be omitted. In our day this inertia is especially potent because of the powerful means which modern technique puts at the disposal of Governments.

Rifts in the Soviet Structure

On the whole, the Government machine has so far followed Stalin. His loyalty might possibly not be so sure, as for some time disquieting rifts have been discernible in the bureaucratic structure. There are constantly to be found in the Soviet Press declarations on the subject of "wreckers" "who prevent the Government from giving happiness to its subjects." In his report to the full session of the Central Committee, held on March 3, 1937, Stalin asserted that "wrecking" and "spying of foreign agents, helped by the Trotskyists,

1 *Pravda*, June 12, 1937.

2 This official version emanating from the Soviet Government is sometimes seriously doubted even in the circles closely related to Communism, but not directly dependent on Stalin. In this connection an article containing very curious details must be noted, written by the German Communist, Erich Wolenberg, former editor of the *Rote Fahne* and former major of the Red Army. It appeared in Warsaw, in the *Volkszeitung*, the organ of the Jewish Socialist Party ("Bund") in Poland (July 20 and August 4, 1937). According to Wolenberg, the primary cause of Tukhachevsky's undoing is to be sought in the long-standing conflict between him and Voroshilov. An officer of the Tsarist army, and a soundly educated man, Tukhachevsky, as early as in 1918, tried to create in the U.S.S.R. a powerful and well-disciplined army on European models. Voroshilov, on the contrary—whose friendship and technical collaboration with Stalin in the field of revolutionary activities is well known—thought, at the time, that the main strength of the Red Army lay in its enthusiasm rather than in its technique. Tukhachevsky's opinion prevailed. The army was organized on the lines suggested by him, and it was not the War Commissar Voroshilov, but the second of his assistants, Tukhachevsky, who became its actual leader. In this capacity, and for purely military reasons, he insisted on the need for modifying Stalin's policy of dictatorial violence, because of the acute discontent which it aroused in the peasant masses all over the Union, and because of the separatist danger which it provoked in the border regions. In order to obtain a change of policy Tukhachevsky, and those of his collaborators who were afterwards shot with him, entered into close contact with the "old Bolshevik" groups which pursued similar objects. This fact led to a clash between Tukhachevsky and Stalin himself. After having curbed Iagoda, with the help of the Red Army, and having obtained a hold on the political police, Stalin turned against the opposition elements in the army. As regards the procedure of the trial of Tukhachevsky and others, Wolenberg maintains that all the accused had already been shot when the tribunal met to try their case.

have permeated into all branches of the administration and of the Party." It appears certain, however, that a great number of the "acts of wrecking" are not due to political "ill-will"; it often comes merely from the general mismanagement and the dishonesty and lack of culture of Soviet officialdom. The sudden arrest of Iagoda shows, however, that in a high Soviet official even ordinary criminal activities can go hand in hand with a latent spirit of opposition. The head of the *Ogupeu*—who had until then been Stalin's confidential agent and the technical organizer of vast public works, which were carried out under compulsion by political prisoners—was incarcerated on charges of theft, embezzlement, and plotting against the life of the Leader. Immediately after his arrest, Stalin, assisted by Iezhov, the new head of the political police, began an energetic clean-up of the whole of the State Security Direction, several hundreds of whose officials were placed under arrest.

Since the months of May and June 1937 arrests and executions follow each other ceaselessly. The "purge" affects not only numberless functionaries of secondary importance but also a great many high dignitaries, both belonging to the Party and to the State, civil as well as military[1]. The Soviet Press publishes in a steady flow lists of *saboteurs* and newly discovered "dangerous enemies of the people," who "camouflaged and disguised" "sold the country to German and Japanese Imperialists," or acted under the orders of the "traitor Trotsky, hiding in Mexico."

The Trial of Bukharin, Rykov, and Associates, March 1938

The cracks in the Soviet régime were especially apparent in the trial which took place in Moscow in March 1938. It opened in an atmosphere of intense excitement in public opinion, divided between the glorification of the economic, political, and military greatness of the U.S.S.R. and the dread of an external war, desired and prepared by the capitalist Powers, such excitement being spread by the Press and in official speeches. The spectre of treason overshadowed the whole of the trial. Twenty-one new accused were brought before the expeditious justice of the Military College of the U.S.S.R. High Court. Bukharin, former member of the

1 Since the middle of the year 1937 until March 1938, fifty-one Commissars of the People, more than three hundred leading personages of the Communist Party, more than five hundred directors of the great trusts, have been arrested, not to speak of the innumerable subordinate officials.

Praesidium of the Third International, an old fighting companion of Lenin and chief theorist of Bolshevism; Rykov, former president of the Council of the People's Commissars; Rakovsky, former Soviet Ambassador to London and Paris; Krestinsky, former Ambassador to Berlin and assistant Commissary for Foreign Affairs—such are the most conspicuous heroes of this trial, in addition to the former People's Commissars, Grinko, Rosengoltz, and Chernov, and the late chief of the political police, Iagoda, who was a zealous myrmidon under Stalin's orders. A few Commissars from the federal republics, three doctors, and a group of proved *agents provocateurs*: a dramatic assembly round the central figures.[1]

The preceding trials which have been witnessed since the month of August 1936 have already exposed Stalin's method, which consists in mixing the true and the untrue, the probable and the improbable; in coupling old revolutionary fighters with upstart profiteers and low police informers, and in overwhelming his opponents with dishonourable slander, in order to ruin them in public opinion, to deprive them of all sympathy, and to destroy them morally as well as physically. This time the method was further developed inasmuch as the accused saw themselves imputed with unprecedented degrading acts. Those who, before them, had gone through this exceptional court had been reproached with acts of wrecking committed with the complicity of capitalist agents, but they had not been charged—as was the case of the twenty-one tried in March 1938—of having sold themselves, since a long date, to the staffs and espionage services of foreign countries; of having provided them for money with information concerning the military situation of the U.S.S.R.; finally, of having considered the murder of Lenin himself, from the time of the separate peace of Brest-Litovsk, and of having effectively brought about the deaths of Gorki, Menzhinsky and Kuibyshev by the most cowardly of murders: that of methodical poisoning with the guilty help of the doctors in attendance.

The recantations of Krestinsky and, especially, the attitude of Bukharin, broke the monotony of the admissions which had been heard in the previous political trials. In wanting to prove too much,

1 The following is a list of the twenty-one accused in this trial: N. Bukharin, A. Rykov, G. Iagoda, N. Krestinsky, Chr. Rakovsky, A. Rosengoltz, V. Ivanov, M. Chernov, G. Grinko, I. Zelensky, S. Bezsonov, A. Ikramov, Fayzulla-Khodzhaiev, V. Charangovich, P. Zubarev, P. Bulanov, V. Maximov, P. Kriuchkov, and the physicians: L. Levin, D. Plietnev, and I. Kazakov.

in wanting to blame the defendants for such vile acts that it is impossible for any thinking being to reconcile them with the past of these men, whose personal efforts in the work of socialization have but lately been vaunted, Iezhov has unwittingly brought to life again, at the last moment, a spark of pride in those souls so carefully worked up during the interminable months in dungeons. This had an indignant repercussion throughout the civilized world, which was further embittered by the attempt to implicate persons living outside Soviet Russia, such as: Emile Buré, Lady Paget, Magdeleine Paz, and the Russian *Menshevik émigré*, Th. Dan. Certain references were also made as to Trotsky's actions and movements. Denials were energetically made by all these, as to the alleged statements, Trotsky even invoking the aid of the French police to prove the falseness of the charges in his case.

Krestinsky's attitude at the first session brought the proof that, as was to be thought, the monstrous admissions of the defendants were quite the contrary of being spontaneous. He shouted out in the presence of judges and foreign correspondents that he had admitted anything in the course of the inquiry in order to be able to come to the court and there to tell the truth to the Government and to the world. This show of independence was of short duration. One single night passed in his dungeon, and Krestinsky retracted all along the line. Considering the setting in which this took place, it is certainly his revolt which was sincere. By what means was it broken down in the space of a few hours?

The crux of the trial was Bukharin's statement. He admitted having been thrown into the opposition by the inhuman methods of collectivization realized by Stalin. The cruel treatment applied to the ex-*kulaks* had raised the question for him as to whether it was rational and fair to continue industrialization at that price. Such an admission in the mouth of an incontestable theorist of Bolshevism should be noted. It is, under the tragic circumstances in which it took place, the most damaging criticism which has ever been made concerning Stalin's methods. Once in the opposition, Bukharin, a revolutionary of the old Bolshevist guard, a companion of Lenin, was easily able to want to translate his state of mind into actual deeds. Nothing contradicts, perhaps, the fact that he had contemplated a "palace" revolution, with the help even of Tukhachevsky, who had other reasons for being discontented.

If the vile accusations levelled by Stalin's myrmidons were to be

doubted, it was fairly probable that the latter felt growing around him personal opponents who might, at any moment, become a real danger to his dictatorial power. Not content with suppressing them physically, he took advantage of the circumstances to disgrace morally his former friends, and to consolidate and enhance the pedestal on which he had hoisted himself.

It was by no means easy to solve the puzzle of Soviet public opinion, and to reveal to what extent it consented to follow, in that affair, its "well-beloved" chief. But Bukharin, Rykov, and especially Rakovsky and Krestinsky, were too well known in Europe for the trial of March 1938 to pass without raising a great conscientious problem for numerous people. In France, the Socialist Leader, Léon Blum, wrote an article in the *Populaire*[1] ending with these words: "Why oblige us to choose between speech, which is dangerous, and silence, which would be disgraceful?"

In *Syndicats* of March 9th the assistant general secretary of the French Trades Union Council, René Belin, writes: "It is impossible to make a sensible man believe that the great majority of the revolutionary leaders of 1917, Lenin's friends, were cowards, traitors, 'dirty dogs,' spies. . . . But . . . the course of the Soviet Revolution, its recession, the consolidation of the dictatorship of one man by the new Constitution . . . all that explains very well the shocks which occur in Russia. . . . In short, the free proletarians will not admit that the Moscow trial is their own affair."

But the most significant voice in this chorus of distress is that of the representatives of the English Independent Labour Party, as set forth in the written protest handed on March 9, 1938, to the Soviet Ambassador in London. Its value is so much the more important as those signing it persist in placing the U.S.S.R. "in the vanguard of humanity marching towards Socialism." Here are a few passages from this document setting forth the deep emotion of the veterans of the English Marxist movement:[2] "We were among the first of the British workers in 1917 to hail the victory of the Russian workers and peasants over Tsarism, the landlords and capitalists. In the Russian Revolution we found inspiration for the working-class movement of our country and of all lands. . . . We cannot believe that even a fraction of the sweeping accusations against tried revolutionists like Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Piatakov, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, and Rakovsky have any foundation. If the charges were true we would be compelled to conclude that there

1 *Le Populaire*, March 8, 1938. 2 *The Times*, March 10, 1938.

was something inherently wrong in the Russian Revolution to attract such degenerate types to the top of the ladder of leadership. . . . It is not the prisoners who have been on trial at Moscow: it is the system of bureaucracy which has grown up since the time of Lenin. If, as the evidence at the trials suggests, any 'opposition' in Russia, however sincere its Socialist purpose, is compelled to take secret form, the responsibility rests with the bureaucracy which has denied it democratic expression."

This call was not heard. Eighteen sentences of death and three long terms of imprisonment[1]—practically for life—ended the trial of the twenty-one.[2] And this verdict had scarcely had time to be carried out when other parodies of justice were already announced.[3] On the morrow of the annexation of Austria by the Reich, at the time when the U.S.S.R. had—more than ever since its creation—need of all its resources, Stalin continued his work of disaggregation whose consequences might be felt even outside of the territory over which his baneful dictatorship holds sway.

1 Rakovsky, Plietnev, and Bezsonov.

2 It is interesting to note that as a result of this trial all Lenin's veterans have been eliminated. The composition of the Central Committee of the Party elected at its VIth Congress in August 1917 was as follows: Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Nogin, Kollontai, Stalin, Sverdlov, Rykov, Bukharin, Artem, Uritsky, Milutin, Berzin, Bubnov, Dzerzhinsky, Ioffe, Krestinsky, Muralov, Smilga, Sokolnikov, and Shaumian.

Six of them died—Lenin, Nogin, Sverdlov, Artem, Dzerzhinsky, and Uritski, who was killed by an opponent of the régime. Eight met their death as a result of Stalin's persecution: Zinoviev, Kamenev, Muralov, Smilga, Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky, and Ioffe, who was driven to commit suicide. Sokolnikov is undergoing a long term of imprisonment. Four have been politically destituted, or have disappeared without leaving any trace: Kollontai, Bubnov, Berzin, Shaumian. Stalin, alone of them all, remains in evidence.

In the present Political Bureau of the Party there remain only Stalin's sycophants. The *Pravda* of January 19, 1938, publishes the names of the new members who have just been appointed to complete this most important Council of the Party. Taking into account the eliminations effected—and especially that of Rudzutak, of whom nothing has been heard for some time, and who is believed to have been executed—this directive centre of the Communist Party is at present composed of: Stalin, Molotov, L. Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Andreiev, Kossior, Mikoian, Chubar, G. Petrovsky, Zhdanov, Eiche, Iezhov, Khruschev. On the other hand, Postyshev has been struck out of the number of deputy members. Furthermore, it must be said, that he does not seem to have been present at the session of the Supreme Council, to which, however, he had been elected. As has become the rule in respect to those disgraced, his name is no longer mentioned, which presupposes the worst. (For comparison with Lenin's *Politbureau*, see p. 234.)

3 At least three trials seem likely to follow that of the twenty-one: that of the eleven Communists of the Left; that of Rudzutak, Mezhlauk, Bubnov, and their associates, at present in prison; and, finally, that of the marshal Iegorov and several admirals and generals, who will probably be judged in secret.

The Reasons of the New Terror

If Stalin at first sought to do away with the old Bolsheviks in whom he saw dangerous rivals, his thunders have since some time struck the new servants of the régime—men formed under him, and even raised by him to high rank in the Sovietic hierarchy. The reasons which prompt Stalin to suppress so many of his own men have puzzled more than one brain.[1]

It will never be definitely known how many of those whom Stalin denounces as "enemies of the people" have actually plotted against him. In face of the growing discontent the dictator fears that islets of opposition may be formed in the Sovietic machine itself. Does he not aim at destroying all those in whom he suspects a potential enemy, before they really become a menace to his life or to his omnipotence? This actually appears to be the reason for many of his brutal reactions, but other considerations also would seem to guide this Asiatic tyrant. Many things are far from being satisfactory in the U.S.S.R. In order that the dictator should keep all his prestige, it is necessary that the responsibility for mistakes and failures should fall on other shoulders. Is it this hidden motive which causes traitors to be found everywhere? Is it not likely, moreover, that in order to last and to continue to apply its ruthless methods, the régime must fan the belief that the country is in permanent danger? The tremendous publicity given to the disclosures torn from the "unmasked enemies" seems to confirm the hypothesis of such a scheme. In showing the danger from without —intensified by defections and connivances from within—does the Vozhd not seek to induce the people to put all their faith in him and to redouble their efforts to preserve the "conquests of the revolution"?[2] Whatever the case may be, the fact that so many of those who should be the most ardent supporters of the Soviet system are accused of sapping it, tends to indicate that Stalin's régime is not only going through a crisis, but is threatened with decomposition.

1 Trying to explain why Stalin at the beginning of 1937 started to abolish "the best elements of the State machinery," Trotsky puts forth the following idea, which is not altogether without interest: "It is not merely a question of thirst for personal power, nor of cruelty. It is impossible for Stalin not to try to assert his personal power. . . . After having silenced the masses and suppressed the Old Guard (Leninist), he thinks he is the only one able to save Socialism," as he understands it. (*Bulletin de l'Opposition of the Bolshevik-Leninists*, edited in Paris, Nos. 56–57, July, 1937.)

2 Finally, Stalin's methods of government must have given a strong impetus to the centrifugal forces latent in the U.S.S.R. and developed separatist tendencies in its periphery. His desire to curb such tendencies accounts for many executions

The new wave of terror spread by Stalin undoubtedly exposes him to seeing many servants of the régime turn away from him. When so many of them perish by his sanguinary hand, would it not be mere self-preservation for them to strike a blow themselves instead of waiting to be struck by him? Until now, the repressive measures applied by the dictator and the powerful police machinery protecting his authority have succeeded in shielding him from the hatred he must have aroused, but it is not certain that this protection will be effective in the future.

Stalin's Personal Power and the New Constitution

While proceeding with the utmost rigour against real or supposed adversaries of the régime, Stalin has steadily endeavoured to get more and more power into his hands. The Constitution of December 5, 1936, sums up the changes for which Stalin has gradually paved the way. As has already been said,[1] it is a further stage in the increase of the personal power of the Moscow dictator; it also implies his growing emancipation from the old Communist Party. The younger Communist elements moulded by him are now regarded as his main support. Henceforth the Party is permanently merged with the bureaucratic State machine. It is to be composed of people chosen by Stalin, in virtue of their professional ability and mainly of their expected loyalty, from that numerous and socially somewhat vague class of the population which he used to describe as "non-party Bolsheviks" and which, in the new Constitution, is given the name of "workers." All intelligence and initiative having been decapitated, all tentatives towards independent thought or action reduced to nothingness, the Communist Party, the last living organism in the U.S.S.R., is itself no longer anything but a "pulley and belt" transmission system, operated by a single leader. Should the latter stop carrying out his function, there will follow a failure of continuity in the working of the Government machinery. At the turning-point where the country will then find itself, and which will open to it the prospect of emancipation, it will experience a crisis, of which the amplitude or the successive phases cannot be foreseen. The eclipse of Lenin had no repercussions that could be in any way comparable to those which will result from the disappearance of Stalin.

to which high officials of the White-Russian, Ukranian, Caucasian, and Central Asiatic Republics have recently been subjected.

1 See Chapter IV, "Political and Economic Structure of the U.S.S.R."

CHAPTER VI

The March Towards Socialism[1]

End of Lenin's Illusions

By 1920 Lenin's illusions about the possibility of Russia entering "at a bound" into the realm of Socialism were finally dispelled.[2] He saw that a country whose "vast extent might contain dozens of large civilized States" was "in a half-wild or even savage condition," and in a state of "misery and illiteracy"; nothing was to be seen there that could recall, even remotely, an era of Socialism, whether already realized or under way of realization. Taken as a whole, the situation of the country at that time appeared to Lenin as "threatening." "What we have arrived at," he wrote, "is not Socialism, but a rebirth of bureaucracy, for as yet there are lacking the economic bases necessary for the construction of a really Socialist society. Without a systematic and stubborn struggle for the improvement of our machinery, we shall perish before being able to create Socialism."[3]

1 In this and the following chapter we have often made use of the monetary unit, "the rouble." In questions bearing on relations with the outer world, the usual basis of Soviet statistics is the pre-war "gold rouble," which contained 0·7742 gramme of fine gold, and was equivalent at the time to 51.46 cents in U.S.A. gold currency, which made the dollar worth 1.942 roubles. (This of course refers to pre-Roosevelt currency, when the dollar contained 22·22 grains of pure gold.) The same gold rouble is used sometimes for a comparative statistical valuation of amounts which would be incommensurable in Soviet roubles because of the latter's fluctuations. Whenever it is not expressly stated in our text that gold roubles are meant, it should be understood that the word "rouble" indicates the paper rouble, which alone is internally used in the U.S.S.R. It is of lesser value, and since 1924 has been officially known as the "*chervonetz rouble*" (see p.282). The "*chervonetz rouble*" has undergone a devaluation in its officially decreed exchange rate (see p. 366). The official rate of this rouble does not, however, correspond to its actual purchasing power on the internal market, this power being, as a rule, inferior to the official rate (see pp. 350–388). The reader should be warned against confusing the "*chervonetz*" with the "*chervonetz rouble,*" the new Soviet currency unit created in 1924; one "*chervonetz*" equals ten "*chervonetz roubles.*" The rouble is divided into 100 kopecks.

2 Lenin's Report to the IXth Congress of the Party, March 29–April 5, 1926.

3 Lenin's notes for the pamphlet entitled *The Tax in Kind* (1921) in the posthumous edition of Lenin's complete works appeared in 1925.

The man who initiated and inspired the November Revolution was, from 1920, driven to the conclusion that, in Russia, the economic foundations of Socialism had not yet been laid. "Is it not clear," Lenin inquired, "that from the material, economic, and industrial points of view, we have not yet reached the threshold of Socialism?"[1] In these circumstances, the immediate task of the Government, in Lenin's view, was to endow the country, as soon as possible, with a solid economic foundation, to bring it out of its state of famine and to stimulate production and exchanges.

Lenin placed at the head of his programme the improvement of peasant farming. The situation of Russian agriculture at the period of War Communism[2] was truly disastrous. According to the League of Nations statistics, the decline of agriculture was expressed in the following figures:[3]

	1909–13 average	*1916 average*	*1920 average*	*1921 average*
Grain crops (millions of tons)	66·85	64·83	28·49	26·50
Sown area (millions of hectares)	89·70	90·80	62·50	54·00
Yield per hectare (in quintals)[4]	7·37	7·08	4·50	4·80

When Lenin envisaged the liberation of agriculture from the suffocating grip of War Communism, he proposed to make the "toiling peasant" the "central figure of economic revival."[5] "The question of collective farming" (*kolkhozes*), he said, "is not for to-day. . . . We must rely on the individual farmer. Such is the position, and in the near future it cannot be anything else; it is no use dreaming, for the moment, of Socialism or of collectivism."[6]

Village produce must reach the towns and workers, not by way of taxes, confiscations, assessments, but through bartering. "The bartering of the peasant's produce against the manufactured output of large scale (socialized) industry," said Lenin, "is the economic essence of Socialism; that is its real basis."[7]

1 Lenin's address at the Xth Congress of the Communist Party (March 8–16, 1921).

2 See p. 111.

3 *Report on Economic Conditions in Russia* (Geneva, 1922).

4 Throughout this work the quintal is understood to be the metric quintal, equivalent to 100 kilograms (or approximately two English hundredweight), and the ton represents the metric equivalent to 1,000 kilograms.

5 Lenin, *Complete Works*, vol. xxxvi, p. 313.

6 Ibid., p. 55.

7 Ibid., p. 312.

Industrial Breakdown of 1920

At the same time Lenin was deeply preoccupied by the condition of Russian industry, which in 1920 was in a state of complete decay. Its output did not exceed 20 per cent of its pre-war level. The figure for large industry, including the production of machinery and equipment, had even fallen below 12 per cent. In Lenin's opinion, everything had to be reconstituted, developed, and rebuilt, by recourse to electricity. "Communism," said Lenin, "means Soviet power, plus electrification. That is our only way to victory." "Without a well-organized heavy industry," he insisted, "there can be no question, even of Socialism, and that is especially true of an agricultural country. We shall not be able to create any industry unless we create a heavy industry, and above all that for constructing machines. Without such an industry we shall disappear as an independent country. But heavy industry needs subsidies. Unless we find them, we shall disappear as a civilized country, to say nothing of a Socialist one."[1]

Lenin's Industrial Plans

In 1920, at Lenin's instigation, nearly 180 specialists, engineers, and scientists, began to work out a plan for industrial reconstruction. Towards the end of the same year the "State Commission for the Electrification of Russia"—known briefly as the *Goelro*[2]—submitted to the VIIIth Congress of the Soviets an estimate providing for an expenditure, in round figures, of 17,000 millions of gold roubles, spread over the next ten years, for the creation of electrical equipment, etc., and for the development of the extraction, transformation and transport industries.

Lenin foresaw two principal sources of funds to meet this kind of expenditure. One was by means of concessions to foreign capitalists; and in this respect Lenin was full of audacity. For him, the concession of 25 per cent of the Baku and Grozny oilfields or a quarter of Russia's richest forests would not be an excessive price to pay, provided "the country could be furnished at that cost with an ultra-modern industrial equipment."[3] Other resources, more im-

1 Lenin's Report to the IXth Congress of the Party. In this report Lenin described electrification as "the great task of the coming ten or twelve years."

2 A syllabic abbreviation of the words *Gosudarstvenaya Elektrifikatsiya Rossii.*

3 Lenin, *Complete Works,* vol. xxvi, p. 213.

portant still, must be obtained internally by economizing wherever possible. "If we keep the town workers in predominance over the peasantry," he said, "we shall be able, at the cost of severe parsimony, to ensure that the least economy effected will be entirely utilized in developing large-scale mechanized industry and electrification. Therein, and therein alone, lies our hope."

The Five-Year Plan for Industrialization

Lenin died in 1924. Six years after his death, the Soviet Union already possessed a powerful heavy industry and was equipped for constructing machinery. The *Goelro* plan, revised three, or even four times, came to be known as the famous "Five-Year Plan of Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R.," which from 1929 gave the impulse to a gigantic development of construction.

A giant metallurgical plant sprang up in Siberia, at Kuznetsk (rebaptized Stalinsk in honour of Stalin). A still bigger metallurgical plant, which is claimed to be the second largest in the world, was erected at Magnitogorsk, in the South Urals. Enormous engineering plants for the construction of heavy machinery were installed in the Ural and in Kramatorsk; works for locomotives at Lugansk; for turbines at Kharkov; for tractors at Tsaritsyn (now called Stalingrad), Kharkov, and Cheliabinsk; motor-car construction plants arose at Nizhni Novgorod (now known as Gorky), Moscow and Yaroslavl; plants for engineering and ball-bearing production in Moscow and Nizhni Novgorod, for agricultural machinery at Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, and Zaporozhie; in the two latter cities for "combined" agricultural machinery; not to speak of a large number of power stations, with the colossal Dnieprostroi hydro-electric station at their head. Then came chemical works in Berezniaki and Bobriki (renamed Stalinogorsk), and a great number of others. All over the Soviet Union there sprang up new plants for the production of aeroplanes, of motor and of electrical equipment, smelters for copper and zinc, sawmills for timber, fertilizer factories, works for making machinery for the timber industry, plants for manufacturing equipment for oil refineries, etc. It is impossible to enumerate all the new works. Over 2,000 of them were erected.

Growth of Heavy Industry

The putting into operation of all this new national economic equipment, and the introduction in many of them of a three-shift system (contrary to the Bolshevik programme, which demanded the abolition of night work, or at least its restriction to four hours), resulted in an enormous increase of output in the heavy industries as may be seen from the following table:[1]

	1913	*1928*	*1934*
Crude oil (million tons)	9·2	11·6	25·5
Coal (million tons)	29·1	35·4	93·6
Pig iron (million tons)	4·2	3·3	10·4
Steel (million tons)	4·2	4·2	9·5
Rolled metal (million tons)	3·5	3·4	6·7
Copper (thousand tons) ..	31·1	30·0	53·3
Sulphuric acid (thousand tons)	121	211	782
Cement (thousand tons)	1,438	1,850	3,592
Capacity of Power Stations (thousand kw.)	1,098	1,905	6,197
Output of electricity (million kw.-hours) ..	1,945	5,007	20,520
Motor-lorries (units)	100	671	55,400
Automobiles (units)			17,100
Tractors (reduced to 15-h.p. type units) ..	—	1,300	114,800
Locomotives (units)	644	479	1,326
Railway trucks (reduced to 2-axle type units)	11,832	10,612	32,400

The output of aluminium was 855 tons in 1932, and 14,408 tons in 1934.[2]

The Soviet official returns of the value of the industrial output on the basis of 1926–1927 prices show a markedly ascending curve. Thus the value of the total output of the large industry (with the exception of that of the timber and fishery industry and of the railway workshops)[3] is shown by the comparative figures in the table on the following page.

1 According to the *U.S.S.R. Handbook*, a work drawn up by sovietic specialists, London, 1936, pp. 146, 147, and 148.

2 Here, as subsequently, we rely entirely on the data furnished by Soviet statistics, of which it must be said at once that they have many serious shortcomings. Among other things, their returns, especially for the output of recent years (as will be seen later), often overrate the actual figures.

3 The production of the timber and fishery industries, as well as the railway workshops, were not included in pre-war industrial statistics. They have therefore been excluded in the above table in order to arrive at figures which allow some measure of comparison between the production during the Soviet period and that of 1913. The figures in the table at the head of page 259 have been taken for 1913, 1920, and 1928–1934 from the Soviet official *Statistical Year Book of the Building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow, 1935, p. 3), and for the period 1921–1927 from *U.S.S.R. Handbook* (London, 1936, p. 201). Large industries should be interpreted as meaning enterprises employing thirty or more workmen, without mechanical power, or sixteen and more men with such power.

	Millions of Roubles		Millions of Roubles
1913	10,251	1927	12,679
1920	1,410	1928	15,818
1921	2,004	1929	19,923
1922	2,619	1930	25,837
1923	4,005	1931	32,263
1924	4,660	1932	36,813
1925	7,739	1933	40,079
1926	11,083	1934	47,636[1]

Even when allowance is made for any possible rectifications of the figures, it cannot[2] be denied that the quantitative results of Russia's industrialization have been enormous.

In order to show the work accomplished for transforming agricultural Russia into a great industrial country, the Soviet statisticians have furnished still other figures which, at first sight, appear extremely convincing. According to these returns, the respective shares of industry and agriculture in Russian national economy have become modified as follows:

	1913 Per cent	*1934*[3] Per cent
Large industries	40·6	73·1
Agriculture	59·4[4]	26·9

1 If we add to this table the purposely excluded figures for the timber and fishery industries and the railway workshops, the output of the large-scale industries will be as follows:

	Millions of Roubles		Millions of Roubles
1928	16,891	1932	38,831
1929	21,243	1933	42,261
1930	27,759	1934	50,600
1931	34,219		

(See *National Economy Plan for* 1936, 2nd edition, Moscow, 1936, p. 392.)

2 Without going into the details of the figures cited, it is sufficient to point out that some Soviet sources give figures which do not accord with those quoted here, although the latter have been drawn from equally authoritative sources. Thus, the Finance Commissary Grinko, in one of his reports, estimated the 1913 output at 16,800 millions of roubles. (*Pravda*, June 25, 1932.) The *Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R.* (vol. i, 1930 ed., p. 15) gives total production in 1920 as having had a value of 3,300 millions of roubles, whereas the official figure we quote in our table places it at only 1,410 millions. The difference is less considerable between our figures and those which Stalin gives for 1929–1933 (see *Pravda* for January 28, 1934, for his report to the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party), or which Kuibyshev, member of the *Politbureau*, cites in his report for 1934. (*Pravda*, January 12, 1935.) These differences are due to the fact that both Stalin and Kuibyshev tend throughout to over-estimate the output of the Soviet industries.

3 *Statistical Year Book of the Building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, 1935, p. 26.

4 This figure also includes the output of the timber and fishery industries and hunting.

These figures seem to establish beyond any doubt that, before the Revolution, agriculture occupied the first place in the national economy, whereas in 1934 the policy of the Soviet Government had already given industry a clearly predominant position. It is easy, however, to demonstrate the artificial character of those figures. In this instance Soviet statistics put forward for comparison elements between which no comparison is possible. In the first place, in 1934, agriculture was below its 1913 level owing to the Soviet policy in the rural districts. The disastrous situation of stock-raising, as the result of enforced collectivization, is a typical example.[1] This alone would have been sufficient to reduce the relative importance of agriculture in the general economy of the country, as compared with 1913. Moreover, the official figures given in this connection deliberately conceal the facts. It is certain that in every country, even in those predominantly agricultural, the total volume of rural production must necessarily be below the total volume of industrial production, in view of the fact that the greater part of agricultural products reaches the consumer only after having undergone industrial transformation.[2] If the figures for 1913 appear to contradict this, the explanation is that, at that period, a large proportion of the industrial enterprises were still in private hands, and their production therefore eluded the official statistics. The Soviet Government, on the other hand, which now controls the entire industrial output, includes all industrial operations, without exception, in its statistical accounting. Nevertheless, whatever artifices the Soviet statistics may have recourse to, the success of the Soviet industries is unquestionable.

Electrification

The results obtained in the industrial field have been particularly appreciable in the two branches which were Lenin's special concern, and above all in electrification. In 1913, the capacity of the Russian electrical power stations was 1,192,000 kw. According to the 1920 plan, the *Goelro* foresaw the installation of a further 1,750,000 kw. within ten years. In 1930, the total capacity of the Soviet power

1 The evil effects of collectivization upon farming will be dealt with later (see pp. 286–292).

2 The total industrial output should therefore comprise (1) nearly the whole of the agricultural production; (2) the additional value due to the industrial transformation of agricultural produce; and (3) the value of mineral products and their transformation.

stations was 2,876,000 kw. In other words, it had not then reached the contemplated 2,942,000 kw. By January 1, 1935, however, the total capacity of the thermal and hydraulic power-stations in operation was 6,212,000 kw., or double that of the *Goelro* estimate.

Mechanical Engineering

Still more remarkable is the progress of mechanical engineering, which is the most important branch of heavy industry with reference to industrialization. According to figures quoted at the VIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of the Soviets, the development under this heading, expressed in four-year periods and on the basis of 1926–1927 prices, was as follows:

	Million Roubles		*Million Roubles*
1902–1905	2,453	1927–1930	11,572
1910–1913	3,404	1931–1934	40,749
1923–1926	3,614		

The Soviet Union has set itself to construct, by its own resources, all kinds of machinery, such as tractors, motor-cars, agricultural machines, and industrial equipment of every description, and has even exported such products, for instance, to Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and the Baltic States.

What is surprising in regard to the industrial development of Soviet Russia is not that production has increased threefold as compared with 1913—for, after all, this progress is only natural—but that, in the space of some five years (1929–1934), Russian production has soared from 21,200 to 50,600 million roubles.[1] This upward bound is all the more remarkable owing to its having occurred during the period of crisis when the industrial production of the principal capitalist countries had fallen off enormously.[2]

1 See footnote on pages 15 and 16.

2 It should be recalled that, expressed in roubles, the Soviet statistics of annual production are not comparable between themselves, over a period of time, for the simple reason that they assume that the rouble maintains a stable value (as expressed in its official exchange rates, which are artificial). An increase in production, as valued in roubles, does not necessarily mean any real increase in quantities produced, but may be merely due to depreciation of the currency. For this reason Soviet statistical data—allowance duly made for their frequently biased character—are much more convincing when they are expressed not in monetary value but in terms of physical units, or of physical measurements (such as weights, etc.).

Before the War Russian industrial output occupied the fifth place in the world; it since attained third on the list. In coal production, the U.S.S.R. has moved up from the sixth to the fourth place; for pig iron, from the fifth to the third; and for production of electric power, from the ninth to the third.

Seeing the achievements as expressed in figures, many a Communist began to feel what Stalin himself described later as "dizziness from success." In launching this metaphorical warning he forgot to add that he had himself been the first to feel "dizzy." At a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in January 1933, Stalin enumerated the successes obtained by Soviet industry in its different branches, and declared proudly that in its scope and power it eclipsed the whole of European industry. At the XVIIth Congress of the Party, early in 1934, he advanced the question: "How could those colossal changes have taken place, within the space of some three or four years, and on the territory of a vast State backward from the point of view of technique and culture? Is it not a miracle?" And he added that such a bound would have been impossible "on a basis of capitalism and small-scale individual enterprise."[1]

Speeding up Industrialization

"We can do anything," was the conclusion at which Stalin arrived on the completion of the Five-Year Plan; and he hastened to accelerate still further the speeding up of industrialization. At that moment the rate of the first Quinquennial Plan began no longer to satisfy the men of the Kremlin. Not so long before the demands of Trotsky and his Opposition had been decried as aiming at an "absurd super-industrialization." In 1930 Trotsky's estimates had been contemptuously described by Stalin as meriting only virulent derision. The Five-Year Plan itself, which had been approved by the highest Soviet authorities, and which in its scope surpassed the most sanguine dreams of the Trotzkyist Opposition, now appeared to those same authorities as manifestly paltry.

Moreover, it was "discovered" at the Kremlin that the non-party

1 These quotations have been taken from the report submitted by Stalin to the XVIIth Congress of the Party, on January 26, 1934.

experts and former *Menshevik* economists who had worked out the Plan had deliberately underrated the resources of the country and reduced the yield from the Plan, with the intention of "harming" and "putting a brake on Socialist development." It was therefore necessary to eradicate the evil bequeathed by the wreckers, and show the country that it could do still better things. Before the year 1930 ended, an order was issued to extend the plans and speed up their application. The fixing of new objectives to be attained in production and in construction work became an all-absorbing everyday task, a kind of collective mania. Astronomical figures and projects on a planetary scale ceaselessly poured out from statistical offices, economic bureaux, scientific research laboratories which had been carefully "purged" of all *Mensheviks* and Right-Wing Communists. Whoever dared to question the possibility of realizing the unrealizable, was disgraced, cursed, and thrown into gaol. In 1931 this mass-psychosis reached its zenith. "Each step we take marks an epoch. Every two or three years is an era. Dare. Prudence is the gospel of dried-up brains, of cowards, of the impotent, the aged, the Philistines."

The First Five-Year Plan was no longer mentioned. No doubts were allowed as to it being accomplished and even surpassed in four years. Everyone was plunged into calculations concerning the Second Five-Year Plan, to cover the period from January 1, 1933, to the end of 1937. During that period all the capitalist countries, including America, would certainly be left far behind. The future was read in figures, as playing cards are used for fortune-telling; and the figures docilely obeyed the desire of man. . . People went dizzy with figures. They were intoxicated by the sight of the gigantic industrial building under construction. They visualized millions of workers toiling ceaselessly, day and night, in an atmosphere of warlike nervousness, intensified by skilful propaganda. The psychosis of 1930 had expanded into the collective frenzy of 1931. People lost all sense of proportion. In their eyes "it sufficed to will," in order that industrial production, obeying the magician's wand, would go on swelling every year by 100, 200, 300, 400 per cent, and even more.

In 1931 56·7 million tons of coal were dug from the mines, 4·87 million tons of pig iron produced, 10·600 millions of kw.-hours of electric power generated. But the "planners" and promoters refused to take all contingencies into account. They stigmatized

warning voices as coming from "wooden" heads. In six years' time, they said, in 1937, the Soviet Union would produce from:[1]

450 to 550 million tons of coal—an increase by 850 per cent.
150 million tons of crude oil—an increase by 600 per cent.
69 million tons of pig iron—an increase by 1,200 per cent.
150,000 millions of kw.-hours of electric energy—an increase by 1,400 per cent.

In 1932, however, the leaders "of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and of the world's proletariat" began themselves to feel that they had gone too far in their policy of super-industrialization. The XVIIth Conference of the Communist Party, early in 1932, curtailed to one-half or even to one-third, the plans drawn up at the time when "dizziness" was at its height. Thus, for the 450–550 million tons of coal which it had been decided to obtain in 1937, the Conference contented itself with 250 million; for 150 million tons of crude oil, with 80–90 millions; for 60 million tons of pig iron, with 22; for 150·000 millions of kw.-hours of electrical energy, with 100,000 millions. But the general programme of the Second Five-Year Plan, so far as heavy industry and large-scale building were concerned, remained, even after those reductions, excessive and much beyond the country's real capacity. Had any attempt been made to carry out this Second Five-Year Plan by the same means and in the same atmosphere as the First, the population of the U.S.S.R. would have succumbed under the task and would have buried under its corpses the gates of the plants under construction; but the hour of disintoxication was now at hand and the inevitable disaster near. Almost before the shouts of welcome of the Second Plan had died away, it became clear that the Government must beat a retreat as quickly as possible. And they did retreat.

Super-industrialization Abandoned

It was in January 1933 that the dictator himself announced the necessity for "slowing down." This he did at the sitting of the same Central Committee of the Party at which he had stated with marked satisfaction that the U.S.S.R. had already been transformed from an agricultural to an industrial country. Two years earlier, in replying to those who contended that the country would not be able to stand the strain imposed, and that it was necessary to slow down, Stalin had said: "No, it is impossible. We cannot slow down

1 *Planned Economy*, 1931, Nos. 5–6, p. 29.

the pace. On the contrary, we must accelerate it."[1] Early in 1932 Stalin had already hinted at the necessity of restraining the effort placed on the country. "Is it possible to say," he asked, "that during the Second Five-Year Plan we should maintain the same accelerated rhythm (as in the First Plan)? No, this cannot be expected." "Even if we wanted to, we could not during the period of the Second Plan—especially during the first two or three years—pursue the same policy of accelerated rhythm."[2]

Second Five-Year Plan

Taking the word from the Leader, the *Politbureau* issued, towards the end of 1934, the text of the Second Five-Year Plan. This showed that the Soviet Government had given up their former wild dreams and renounced draining all the country's resources in an orgy of capital investment, on a crushing expansion of heavy industries, on a breathless race to produce astronomical quantities of coal, iron, oil, copper, etc., and on the realization of plans of planetary dimensions. The drop in production fixed for 1937 indicated the importance of the retreat.

The three columns of figures below show respectively: (1) the crazy projects of the spring of 1931; (2) the reduced, though still greatly exaggerated plans of 1932, adopted by the XVIIth Party Conference; and (3) the still more attenuated figures ratified by the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party, in February 1934.

PRODUCTION PLANNED FOR 1937

	1931 Plan	*1932 Plan*	*1934 Plan*
Coal (millions of tons)	450–550	250	152
Output of electricity (millions of kw.-hours)	150,000	100,000	38,000
Pig iron (millions of tons)	60	22	16
Crude oil (millions of tons)	150	80–90	47
Copper (thousands of tons) ..	847	540	135
Timber (millions of cubic metres)	—	90–100	43
Electrification of railways (km.)	—	22,400	5,000

Concurrently with the curtailment of its heavy industry programme, the Government began to think of relaxing the Draconian régime existing in the rural districts and of fostering light industries, as well as the food industry. It came to realize the necessity that the development of the light industries should keep up with the heavy industries and thus draw nearer to the opinion which, during the First Five-Year Plan, had been considered as counter-revolutionary,

1 Stalin's speech at the Conference of Industrial Workers. (*Izvestia*, February 5, 1931).
2 The XVIIth Conference of the Party, January 30 to February 4, 1932.

namely, that the development of light industries must not only equal but even outpace that of the heavy industries.

Official Estimate of Results of the First Five-Year Plan

Stalin certainly did his best to disguise the retreat by declarations designed to preserve the prestige of power as much as possible. To convince the people that its sacrifices had not been in vain, he announced that the First Five-Year Plan had been carried out in a perfect manner, "to the extent of 93·7 per cent." The "tiny deficiency" was ascribed by Stalin to the necessity for suddenly "diverting a certain number of plants from their normal purpose and mobilizing them for the needs of national defence, owing to complications in the Far East."[1]

Still more optimistic were the appraisals of the foreign Communist leaders. At the VIIth Congress of the *Komintern*, held in Moscow, in August 1935, the French delegate, Marcel Cachin, leader of the French Communist Party and editor of *L'Humanité*, was loud in his admiration for Soviet industrial achievements. "The colossal work of carrying out two Five-Year Plans," he said, "fills the proletarians of the whole world with joy and pride. While heroically overcoming countless difficulties, and fighting against ruthless enemies, at home and abroad, you have built up, at the cost of enormous efforts, an industry which would take the most powerful capitalist countries centuries to create. You have the right to be proud of your work and of your unprecedented achievements. You have shown that Socialism is not a dream but the most living reality. The Soviet Union is exercising the most powerful revolutionary action on the whole world."[2] Cachin's speech is a sample of the thoughts and feelings which are nowadays largely shared in working-class and intellectual circles in Europe and America.

If the results achieved by the U.S.S.R. have been so magnificent as its eulogists contend, why did the Soviet Government so manifestly abandon its earlier projects? This is answered at the end of this chapter.

Natural Wealth of U.S.S.R.

In order duly to gauge the results obtained, it is indispensable that Soviet economic activity should be envisaged in the light of its actual physical background and of its historical perspective.

1 *Pravda*, July 27, 1935.
2 Translated from the Russian text published at Moscow.

The first circumstance to be borne in mind, when analysing the "Russian miracle," is that it happened in a country occupying one-sixth of the inhabited surface of the globe. From east to west and from north to south, Russia's vast territory overflows with natural riches. According to the latest estimates by Soviet geologists, the reserves of iron ore in the U.S.S.R. (exclusive of ferruginous quartz) represent 52 per cent of the entire world's deposits. The reserves of manganese, 64 per cent; of potassium salts, 64 per cent; of phosphates, including apatites, 62 per cent. Soviet sources of fuel for steam-boilers, locomotives, steamers, power stations, etc., are colossal. The country possesses 17 per cent of the world's reserves of timber, 35 per cent of its crude oil, while her rivers are capable of supplying further power equivalent to 200 million h.p. Her subsoil contains deposits of platinum, gold, copper, zinc, lead, bauxites, nickel, immense deposits of sulphates (in the basin of Karabugaz), mercury, antimony, radium, molybdenum, wolfram, bismuth, etc. According to the *U.S.S.R. Handbook* (1936), Russian reserves of coal are estimated at 1,200,000 million metric tons (which would give the Soviet Union, in this respect, the second place in the world), her reserves of peat equal 72 per cent of the entire globe's known total; those of crude oil, at 3,000 million tons; of manganese at 662,700,000 tons.

Russia has black-soil regions capable of producing most abundant harvests; immense surfaces suitable for the cultivation of flax and cotton, including the Egyptian variety (the Vaksha region in Tadzhikistan). The country can furnish large quantities of tea, grapes, rice, oranges and tangerines, and the greatest possible variety of fruits and vegetables (from northern species to sub-tropical). It abounds in fur animals and fish. When Russia's known natural resources are taken into account, its startling economic advancement no longer appears at all miraculous, but rather as a natural phenomenon and simple consequence of existing riches, which are there for the taking.

When Stalin decided to "build up Socialism in a single country," he must have been strongly encouraged by the fact of Russia's inexhaustible natural resources. They opened up before his mind the perspective of the country's ability of becoming economically self-sufficient. With an enormous expenditure of energy, if not always with success, the Soviet Government has endeavoured to make a more thorough exploration of the country's natural wealth and

possibilities. Twelve thousand scientists and technicians and 100,000 workers were employed in geological prospecting alone. In many instances these researches were based on the preconceived belief that all that was needed could be found in the country in sufficient quantities for "building up Socialism in one country." Hence the failure of many of these expeditions. For all that the Soviet engineers have discovered many riches hitherto unexploited. New possibilities have also been detected in the domain of agriculture. In 1931 it was found that rubber could be extracted from a plant, the *kok-sagyz*, which may successfully be grown in different parts of European Russia and in the irrigated area of Central Asia. The cultivation of *kok-sagyz* is already steadily increasing. This new natural product, concurrently with the development of a past synthetic rubber industry, has lately enabled the U.S.S.R. to cease importing rubber from abroad.

Pre-War Economic Achievements and Soviet Successes

Those who suppose that, during the epoch of Tsardom, Russia was doomed to a state of economic stagnation, and that the Soviet Government first drew it out of its lethargy, are badly deceiving themselves. The Soviet Press certainly never ceases to tell as that "We are producing aeroplanes, motor-cars, and tractors, which Tsarist Russia did not manufacture;" that whereas in 1907 turbines had a capacity of only 200 kw., "we now construct them with a capacity of 50,000 kw.;" that in Old Russia construction of machines was practically non-existent, "whilst nowadays the country produces all kinds of things, from a complicated aero-engine to a gigantic blooming."[1]

In the minds of the Soviet leaders, any comparison between pre-war economic conditions and those of to-day tends to enhance the importance of their own achievements. The utter disingenuousness of such a point of view is obvious. It is natural that the farther back we go from present times (1938) the more we shall be struck by the marvels of modern technique. Even in 1900 the air was still unconquered, motor-cars were in their infancy, and turbines of 50,000 kw. had never been heard of. To-day all these things are taken for granted, but what has the Soviet Government contributed to all this? It did not invent either aeroplanes, turbines, or motor-cars. A comparison between the achievements

1 A machine used in the rolling of steel.

of the U.S.S.R. and those of pre-revolutionary Russia might have some value if, by some stretch of imagination, we could picture what Russian industry would have been like had there been no War and no Revolution, or had the latter ended in the establishment of a bourgeois republic. Who could swear then that, by now, Russian industry would not have been even more powerful than it has become after the two Sovietic Plans?

Lenin himself in his book, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, has pointed out that towards the close of the XIXth century Russia's industrial development was more rapid then anywhere else in Europe. Between 1889, when Lenin wrote his book, and the Revolution of 1917, Russia had made still greater economic progress. During the nine years alone which separated the Russo-Japanese War from the World War, industrial output had doubled in Russia as shown above.[1] It must not be forgotten that, in spite of her general backward state, pre-war Russia possessed an industrial output which was exceeded in Europe only by Great Britain, Germany, and France.

On the eve of the Great War Russia was on the threshold of a brilliant economic future. Like every other country, of course, she had had her periods of crisis and depression; but on the whole her economic development showed more and more rapid progress. This advance was achieved by normal means, without recourse to the measures of exceptional violence which the Soviet Government has constantly used in its economic activity.

Some Features of Economic Soviet Development

Looked at from another angle, Soviet industrial efforts also benefited from a factor which was very definitely visible in pre-war Russia.

So far as the concentration of labour and the grouping of huge masses of workers in a small number of industrial enterprises is concerned, the U.S.S.R. occupies the first place in the world, far ahead of both the United States of America and Germany. The total number of industrial workers employed in large-scale industry in each of the three countries are respectively distributed as follows:

Undertaking employing	*Germany* *Per cent*	*U.S.A.* *Per cent*	*U.S.S.R.* *Per cent*
Less than 100 workers	59 (both rows)	12	4·7
From 101 to 500 workers		41	17·2
From 501 to 1,000 workers	13	17	14·1
Over 1,000 workers	28	30	64·0

1 See chapter "Russia before the Revolution of 1917," pp. 14–17.

From 1930 to 1932 the number of enterprises employing over 5,000 people has doubled in the U.S.S.R. From 102 they have risen to 201; and their average number of workmen and employees has attained 9,600. In other countries concentration is the least intense in the light industries and the food industry. In the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, it is in these very industries that concentration is particularly marked. Of the total number of people employed in those two categories of industry, the percentages of undertakings in each trade which employ over 1,000 persons is as follows (as compared with the same trades in the U.S.A.):

	U.S.S.R. in 1932 *Per cent*	*U.S.A. in 1929* *Per cent*
Cotton industry	93	31
Manufacture of clothing	78	6
Boots and shoes ..	71	16
Knitted goods	70	21
Confectionery	66	9
Woollen goods ..	65	27
Canned foodstuffs	38	9
Bakery	22	7

Is this a new phenomenon in Russia? By no means. With its concentration of labour, Soviet industry is merely continuing along the track already followed by the country before the Revolution. It has only intensified the method bequeathed by its predecessors. Without speaking even of the often important factories worked in times past by serf labour, let us remember only that in the nineties Russia already held the first place in Europe as far as the predominance of huge enterprises was concerned. In 1895 concerns employing over 500 workers totalled in Germany 15 per cent of the entire working population, and in Russia 45 per cent. Taken by industries the ratios were similar. In the food industry: in Germany, 6 per cent of the total workers were employed in concerns with over 500 wage-earners; in Russia, 24 per cent. In the metallurgical industry: in Germany, 24 per cent; in Russia, 35 per cent (which rose by 1900 to 52 per cent). In flax, hemp, and jute mills: in Germany, 24 per cent; in Russia, 75 per cent. In the cotton industry: in Germany, 27 per cent; in Russia, 85 per cent. In Western Europe, where modern industry began earlier, industrial development evolved gradually from one form to another; from handicrafts to primitive home manufacture; then to the elementary factory; and then to large mechanized production. In Russia the process was

quite different. Cutting out all intermediate stages, the Soviet Government adopted at a stroke the most highly advanced forms of industry. In the period from 1928 to 1933 it systematically created giant plants by intensifying the importation from abroad of new equipment, new ideas, and new men. However, a similar process, but without the excesses pertaining to the Soviet period, was already going on in Russia in the nineties of the last century, and even earlier.

Without the legacy which it inherited from the former Russia, in the form of concentrated industries, of mechanized equipment, of technical personnel, and of a stock of accumulated knowledge and experience, Stalin's Five-Year Plan would never have had the slightest chance of seeing daylight. The fact that, as Trotsky himself declared, "Russian capitalism knew how to build factories on an American scale in the emptiness of the steppes," furnished him with the argument that the Soviet Government could do as much.

Soviet Industry Compared with European and American

Equally unconvincing is the statement that the U.S.S.R. is on the point of overtaking the U.S.A. in industrial production, which statement is so frequently printed by the Soviet Press and obstinately repeated by Communist leaders in Russia and abroad.

In fact, it is sufficient to distribute Soviet output per head of the population of 170 millions, even on the basis of Soviet statistics, to demonstrate that the U.S.S.R. is still lengths behind the principal capitalist countries. France, although poor in coal, produced even during a crisis over a ton of coal per head of population per annum; the U.S.S.R. provides only half that quantity. France furnished, even during the crisis, 370 kw.-hours of electric power per head; the U.S.S.R. generates only one-third of that quantity. Prior to the world depression, the comparative outputs of coal, iron, and steel per head of the population by the great producing countries were as given in the table overleaf.

The U.S.S.R. has still a long way to travel before she reaches the high economic power of the capitalist countries, which is best demonstrated by industrial output per head of population. At the same time, if only the total industrial output of Russia be considered, it cannot be denied that the country has made a great bound forward. This fact deserves full recognition on its own merits,

COAL:	Great Britain	5,324 kg.
	U.S.A.	4,470 kg.
	Germany ..	2,313 kg.
	U.S.S.R. (in 1934)..	550 kg.
PIG IRON:	Belgium	837 kg.
	U.S.A. ..	321 kg.
	France ..	244 kg.
	Germany	184 kg.
	Great Britain ..	140 kg.
	U.S.S.R. (in 1934)	62 kg.
STEEL:	Belgium	812 kg.
	U.S.A.	422 kg.
	France	230 kg.
	Germany ..	226 kg.
	Great Britain ..	181 kg.
	U.S.S.R. (in 1934)	57 kg.

without any worthless affirmation that in the economic field Old Russia did not show rapid progress, nor that the U.S.S.R. has eclipsed all the capitalist countries.

First Five-Year Plan and Governmental Pressure

From the standpoint of the economist, the historian, the politician, the sociologist, and the psychologist alike, the period of the First Five-Year Plan presents itself as a surprising epoch, the like of which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the whole of the world's history.

Under a pressure without measure from above, the entire population of a vast country was compelled to cease thinking of its food, clothing, and lodging accommodation, and to plunge its whole being into dreams of pig iron, copper, coal, turbines, rolling-mills, machine tools, and colossal manufacturing plants. Throughout those years the nerves and muscles of the nation were strained almost to breaking point. "We lived solely in our constructions. When we thought, we thought in the figures of those constructions; when we spoke, we spoke of nothing else. When we sat in committee, we discussed and argued about nothing else. When we went to sleep, we dreamed about nothing else!" All thought and care about human beings disappeared.[1]

The human entity was blotted out by coal, iron, copper, giant

1 Molotov, the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union, said at the time: "We must repudiate all talk about the theory that Socialism means production to meet the needs of consumption."

locomotives, the production of sulphate of ammonia, the electrolysis of zinc. And always and everywhere the watchword was: "Overtake and surpass the industry of the capitalist countries!" "Overtake America!" "Speed up!"

European and American Technical Aid

But from where did all those new turbines, machine tools, giant plants, motors, tractors, and power stations come? On this point we have an explanation which could not be more clear or more unquestionable. It was supplied at the VIIth Congress of the Soviet by Ordzhonikidze, the People's Commissar for Heavy Industry. "Our plants," he said, "our mines, and our factories, are now supplied with an excellent technical equipment which is unequalled in any other country." ("Tempest of applause" is here inserted in the official report.) "You may ask, how does it happen that no other country has such a perfect technique as we have? Where did we obtain it? We have bought from the Americans, the Germans, the French, and the English the most improved machinery, the latest achievements of world technique, and we have provided our plants with them; whereas many factories and mines abroad are equipped with machinery dating from the XIXth and early XXth century."[1]

It is difficult to say that "no country" has such perfect technique as the U.S.S.R., such a statement would be an obvious exaggeration. But Ordzhonikidze's explanation on the whole is sincere, and goes a long way towards destroying the mysticism which the Marxian world has artificially built up around the "miracle in the East." The truth lies in the fact that the spiritual and manual achievements of the German, English, French, Italian, American, and other engineers, workmen, and industrial leaders, have been transported from Western Europe and America to Siberia, the Urals, and the steppes of the Ukraine. Arguing objectively, it must be recognized that Western Europe and the U.S.A. have been the real creators of "the miracle in the East." It has transplanted in the U.S.S.R. the wonderful fruits of its technical genius, and thus rendered possible the creation of the giant enterprises of which the Soviet Government is so proud.

1 *Pravda*, February 2, 1935.

Cost of Industrialization

Provided the necessary resources were available, it was certainly not difficult to transport to the U.S.S.R. the entirety of modern technique. The sole question was reduced to—how would the necessary financial means be rapidly found to effect the industrialization of the country?

The construction of new plants was costly, and foreign workmen, engineers, and capitalists had to be paid.

In order, for instance, to create an enormous plant for tractors at Stalingrad, on the Volga, equipment was brought from abroad at a cost of 35 million gold roubles (not the Soviet paper ones); the Kharkov tractor plant cost 15 million gold roubles; the Molotov motor-car plant at Nizhni-Novgorod, over 40 million gold roubles; the Stalin motor-car works in Moscow, over 25 million gold roubles; the caterpillar tractor works in Cheliabinsk, 32 million gold roubles; the Dnieprostroi hydro-electric station, 31 million gold roubles; the Kaganovich ball-bearing works, over 20 million gold roubles. For the equipment of the central electric power stations, 83 million gold roubles were paid to foreign firms; for steam boilers, 145 millions; for the equipment of sixteen metallurgical plants, including those of Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk, 154 million gold roubles. Even the printing office of *Pravda*, the official organ of the Communist Party, to which was so proudly drawn the attention of the French Cabinet Ministers during their visit to Moscow, is of foreign origin. From data supplied by the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade,[1] it is to be deducted that for the construction of new works alone, during the period 1929–1932, the Soviet Union paid 4,000 millions of gold roubles to foreign firms for their help in the industrialization of the country. Expressed in Soviet paper roubles, which are alone current in the U.S.S.R., such a sum could only be represented by astronomical figures.

Apart from the material "objects" procured from abroad, vast sums were spent on importing foreign technical "ideas" and on securing the services of alien experts. Foreign countries, again—America and Germany in particular—lent the U.S.S.R. active aid in drafting the plans for all the undertakings to be constructed. They supplied the Soviet Union with tens of thousands of engineers, mechanics, and foremen. During the First Five-Year Plan not

1 *Pravda*, January 31, 1935.

a single plant was erected or a new industry launched without the direct help of foreigners working on the spot. Without the importation of Western European and American objects, ideas, and men the "miracle in the East" would not have been realized, or, at least, not in so short a time.

Whence Came the Money?

From what source did the Soviet Government obtain those 4,000 millions of gold roubles which is estimated to have been the cost of the Russian imports utilized for industrialization purposes? This huge sum has come from the output of gold in Siberia,[1] from foreign loans and credits, from concessions (as Lenin had suggested), and finally from Russian exports.[2] The last-mentioned source was the one chiefly resorted to. And these exports were effected in foodstuffs, a method to which Lenin was definitely adverse. "It is highly undesirable and dangerous," he said, "for us to export foodstuffs," which could not be allowed "because we have not yet provided food for all our own people."[3]

Exports of Raw Materials and Foodstuffs Intensified

In order to carry out as rapidly as possible the construction and equipment of new industrial undertakings, the U.S.S.R. applied a policy of exporting everything that ought not to have been exported. The Soviet Government exported butter, when at the same time the country experienced a lack of it. It exported sugar, of which the population was ruthlessly kept short. In 1931 Russia incontestably suffered from famine. Millions of people in the towns had to stand in queues to secure a morsel of bread. Exportation of wheat ought not even to have been thought of. Nevertheless, 300,000,000 poods (nearly five million tons) of wheat were exported in order that the Soviet Government should be able to buy turbines, machine tools, and other wonderful appliances.[4]

1 Since 1934 Soviet Russia has filled the second place among gold-producing countries (see p. 352).

2 It should not be overlooked that the Bolsheviks have refused to recognize the financial obligations of the old régime, and have thus freed themselves from payments abroad on that account.

3 Lenin, *Complete Works*, vols. xxv and xxvi.

4 One pood equals 16·38 kgs. or 36 lb. avoirdupois.

Imports of Articles of Consumption Stopped

At the same time the State reduced, and in some cases completely suspended, the importation of articles which were indispensable for legitimate requirements of home consumption.[1] Tea had always been Russia's national beverage. In 1913, 75,000 tons of tea were imported, but in 1930 only 24,000 tons. The people were assured that they would soon be able to drink home-grown tea from the plantations around Batum, in the Caucasus. In the meantime they had to make shift with a substitute for tea made from carrots, and thus to contribute to the construction of some new industrial undertaking. In 1913, 110,000 tons of various animal and vegetable fats had been imported into Russia for the manufacture of soap. During the First Five-Year Plan these imports were reduced to nil, and in the absence of fats a soap made out of clay was introduced. In 1932 clay represented 40 per cent (in weight) of all Soviet soap. *Economic Life*, the official organ of the *Gosplan*, of June 18, 1932, bluntly stated that "The Moscow soap industry should make use of the Gzhel clays, and the soap works at Leningrad, Kazan, and Nizhni-Novgorod of local clays." Imports of shoe leather, rice, paper, and coffee likewise stopped.

Owing to the lack of fine wool in Russia, this commodity was usually brought in from abroad. In 1932, as the Soviet journal *Light Industry* triumphantly reported, in its issue of May 15, "not one single ounce of wool was now being imported." Just as boots and shoes were being made of leather substitutes, so woollen articles were made of cotton and rags, with but a slight admixture of wool in order to convey its odour. Imports of cotton were suddenly cut off, under the pretext that Central Asia, the Crimea, and Northern Caucasus would, "in the future," be able to supply a sufficiency of it for the country's needs. As the cultivation of good quality and large yield cotton demands a system of irrigation which cannot be created at short notice the population of the

1 The effect of this reduction in imports on the population was the more severe owing to the fact that Soviet imports had already consisted chiefly of articles destined for industry. Whereas in 1913, of the total imports, articles required by industry accounted for 64·9 per cent, as against 28·7 per cent of articles of consumption and 6·4 per cent of other goods, the figures for the U.S.S.R. in 1928–1929 were 86·8 per cent of articles for industrial use, and only 13 per cent for articles of consumption, exclusive of 0·2 per cent of other goods. The absolute figures are still more striking: the value of imported articles of consumption amounted to 395 million gold roubles in 1913, and to 55 million gold roubles in 1928–1929.

U.S.S.R. had to go without sheets, shirts, body linen, towels, and pants. "We have come to a queer pass," Ieremin, the deputy Commissar for light industries, remarked one day: "there are no towels and no more handkerchiefs!"[1] By suppressing imports of wool and cotton, the Soviet Government, in respect of these two articles alone, "saved" a sum of 254 million gold roubles. Instead of being used for internal consumption requirements, this money was devoted to the worship of the country's new idols—the giant new plants then under construction.

In Search of Foreign Exchange

The export of foodstuffs and the suppression of imports of articles of consumption was certainly one of the principal means of ensuring the financing of the Five-Year Plan. The masters of the Kremlin, however, did not stop at that. Parallel with it, the Government vigorously forced the exportation of crude oil and timber, and increased the output of gold. In so doing it manœuvred very skilfully by covering the passive balance of its trade with America by its favourable trade balances with England, France, and Belgium, and by obtaining State-guaranteed credits from foreign States (such as Germany and Italy). It is only fair to state that, thanks to all these measures—which included the selling of art treasures from the national museums—the U.S.S.R. became one of the rare countries which, at the height of the world economic crisis, strictly kept its foreign engagements. In its efforts to obtain foreign exchange, the Soviet Union did not hesitate to impose any sacrifice on the nation. Thus, in order to intensify timber exports, it inflicted veritable penal servitude not only on those condemned for common law offences, but also upon the vast number of political prisoners. Large numbers of peasants and workmen, moreover, were also compelled to work in the woods and saw-mills, under penalty, in case of refusal, of being deprived of their food-cards and treated as "deserters from labour."[2] The massive sales of timber abroad led to a reckless destruction of forests. "We are obliged," wrote the organ of the *Gosplan*, "to fell not only the trees which mature every year, but many more; in fact, not to exploit the forests properly, but to destroy them."[3]

1 *Light Industry*, May 30, 1932.
2 *For Industrialisation*, December 17, 1930, and *Economic Life*, January 20, 1931.
3 *Economic Life*, June 18, 1932.

Accelerated Accumulation of Capital

The enormous expenditure for the creating of a heavy industry, under the First Five-Year Plan, resulted in a vast accumulation of capital investments, which has been brought into existence only by ruthlessly sacrificing consumption. What figures do such capital investments attain? The answer was supplied by Grinko, the People's Commissar for Finance, at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee.[1] "During the four years to which the First Five-Year Plan was cut down, we succeeded in accumulating 116,000 million roubles in the hands of the proletarian State and in investing this sum for the needs of the building up of Socialism. We did that solely by our country's own effort in accumulating capital."

It is also interesting to note what proportion of the national income was set aside by the State for investment in the country's economic equipment. According to calculations made by the Institute of Economic Research of the *Gosplan*, Great Britain, in 1920–1930, diverted from consumption with this object only 4 per cent of the total national income; Germany in 1924–1930, 7·7 per cent; and the U.S.A. in 1919–1929, 10–12 per cent. Ragolsky asserts that in 1931 similar investments by the U.S.S.R. amounted to 28 per cent of the national income.[2] His estimate, however, is founded on such superficial and little justified bases that it cannot be accepted. *For Industrialisation*, the organ of Soviet heavy industries, of January 1, 1933, dealt with the question much more precisely. In its opinion, the proportion of the national income thus invested amounted before 1929 to about 15 per cent, in 1930 to 30 per cent, and in 1931 to "already more than 40 per cent." This figure enables us to gauge to what degree of exaggeration the U.S.S.R. has pursued its effort of accumulation at the cost of lowering the national level of consumption. This is the price Soviet Russia has been paying for the striking blossoming of its colossal industrial plants. According to certain estimates, the record percentage of investments reached before the War was held by the United States of America and Germany, each of whom returned investments equivalent to 28 per cent of the national income. It must not be overlooked, however, that the national income of those countries greatly exceeded the present income of the U.S.S.R. where—the annual

1 *Pravda*, January 29, 1933.

2 *Planned Economy*, June 1932, p. 143.

earnings per head of the population being very low—the recent unprecedented ratio of capital investments left only a meagre balance for consumption, and condemned the population to a standard of comfort reduced to an intolerably low level.

In 1927 Strumilin, author of *Studies in Soviet Economics* and Fellow of the Soviet Academy, pointed out that "poverty-stricken Tsarist Russia" strove to invest a great deal at the cost of her nourishment, and from this he seriously concluded that this feature of the pre-war régime was "one of great promise for the future of revolutionary Russia." "Considering," he said, "that the ascetism of the consumer has become an inveterate habit with us, the rate of accumulation may even exceed all known world records." Thus everything was staked on the deeply rooted frugality of the Russian people; in other words, on the systematic under-satisfaction of elementary human needs in food, clothing, and lodging. Such was the source whence Stalin obtained the "subsidies" for heavy industry, which Lenin had failed to secure from foreign capitalists. Strumilin's forecast has been brilliantly fulfilled. The percentage of capital investments in the U.S.S.R. has been established at four times the figure at which it stood in the United States of America in the post-war period.

Home Expenses of Industrialization

After foreign equipment had been imported and foreign experts brought in to install it, the necessary working capital had to be found to employ whole armies of Russian factory workers. In 1913 the paid workers in the towns and villages numbered about 10,000,000. In 1923–1924 their total had dropped to only 7,140,000; but by 1928 on the eve of the First Five-Year Plan it had again risen to 11,420,000. The authors of this Plan calculated that its application would involve by 1932 the employment in the new industries of a further 4,300,000 people. In reality, the First Plan absorbed no fewer than 6,700,000 additional workers. The original estimate was that when this Plan was brought into operation, the total number of workers employed throughout the country would not exceed 14,700,000 (covering both those formerly employed and the recently engaged); instead of which the total had reached, in 1932, 22,900,000. To compensate for the poor quality of its new workers, who were in most cases untrained, underfed, undisciplined, and

inefficient,[1] the Government fell back on quantity. It threw, as in war time, enormous human masses on the labour "fronts," in order to fill up the "gaps" which occurred, sometimes here and sometimes there. There could be no real shortage of labour, for the population of the present territory of the U.S.S.R. amounted in 1913 to 139,000,000, in 1928 to 150,000,000, and in 1932 to 163,000,000.

Taking the various branches of employment, the number of wage and salary earners underwent the following changes (the figures for agriculture include the *sovkhozes*, but not, of course, the *kolkhozes*):

	1927–1928	*1932*	*1935*[2]
1. Industry, transport, trade, building, communal enterprises.. ..	6,288,000	14,591,800	15,721,700
2. Farming and forestry	2,050,000	4,097,100	4,401,900
3. State institutions (administrative, judicial, educational)	2,294,000	3,912,400	4,279,200
4. Other categories ..	904,000	578,100	808,700
Totals ...	11,536,000	23,179,400	25,211,500

1 The Soviet review *Plan* (1936, No. 16, p. 10) gives the following comparative data as to the output of a worker in the U.S.S.R. and in the U.S.A.:

	Pig Iron	*Coal*	*Cement*	*Paper*	*Boots and Shoes*
U.S.S.R. ..	420 tons	240 tons	140 tons	13·0 tons	420 pairs
U.S.A.	1,734 „	929 „	834 „	85·7 „	1,737 „

These figures refer to 1929, except for pig iron, which figures are for 1935.

2 *Labour in the U.S.S.R.*, a digest of statistical data (Moscow, 1936, pp. 10 and 11).

It must not be assumed that the bureaucratic machinery of the U.S.S.R. is limited to the paid personnel of the State institutions. It comprises also large numbers of employees figuring below under the heads of "Industry," etc., as well as the very numerous grades of *kolkhozes*, or collective farms, which have not been included in the above table, and which will be dealt with later on p. 294.

In examining more closely the first heading of the above table ("Industry, etc."), we find in it the following categories of wage-earners:

	1927–1928	*1932*	*1935*
1. Industry ..	3,441,000	6,728,800	7,466,200
2. Transport..	1,292,000	2,222,000	2,921,800
3. Communications (telegraph, telephones, wireless)	95,000	224,300	334,400
4. Trade and commerce	515,000	1,410,800	1,650,000
5. Catering run by the State and other public bodies (canteens, State restaurants, etc.)	53,000	515,100	484,800
6. Credit	91,000	128,400	151,900
7. Building	684,000	3,125,800	2,203,900
8. Communal enterprises	117,000	236,600	508,700
	6,288,000	14,591,800	15,721,700

[*Footnote continued on page 281*

It is in the large-scale and building industries that the increase in the number of workmen and of employees has been the most marked. Between 1927–1928 and 1932 the increase represented 3,448,300 people in the former and 2,442,000 in the latter. These labour armies had to be supplied with food, to be paid wages or salaries—however small—and provided with lodgings.

Inflation

In its efforts to raise the necessary funds, the Soviet Government resorted, until 1933, among other means, to the tried and familiar expedient of the printing press; in other words, to inflation.

The beginning of inflation dates from the Great War. After July 27, 1914, Russia, like all other belligerent Powers, ceased to observe the convertibility of her banknotes into gold and began to issue paper money, in order to meet her war expenditure.[1] After the Revolution of March 1917, the Provisional Government pursued the same financial policy. As a result of the growing inflation, the purchasing power of the paper rouble fell lower and lower during the years 1914–1917. If we take as a unit the workman's budget index[2] at January 1914 as equivalent to one point, its figure for

The figures for industry may be dissected as follows:

	1927–1928	*1932*	*1935*
Large-scale industry	3,033,000	6,481,300	7,065,500
Small-scale industry	408,000	247,500	400,700

The paid personnel had scarcely increased under the heading "Credit," or, needless to say, under that of "Small-scale industry," which was in a state of utter stagnation, crushed as it was by the giant concerns.

The above figures show, among other things, a relatively small increase of the number of workers and employees during the period 1932–1935, as compared with the period of the First Five-Year Plan. Under the Second Five-Year Plan the increase of output has been, proportionately speaking, much greater than the increase of labour. It follows from this that the technique of production and the output from manual labour were higher. The figures quoted above also show that the Second Five-Year Plan resulted in only a small increase of employment in large-scale industries. This is due to the fact that the industrial megalomania of the First Five-Year Plan is already waning, and that its results have not always been economically justified. Finally, the great reduction of employment in the building industry attests the slowing down of the construction fever which attained its culminating point in 1930, when its delirium knew no bounds.

1 Multiplied issues of paper money provided the Imperial Russian Government with 7,000 million gold roubles, and defrayed 40 per cent of the war expenditure.

2 The budget index comprises the aggregate of the principal items of monthly expenditure of an average workman in each country. It includes the cost of food, clothing, rent, heating, lighting, and transport.

January 1917, that is, shortly before the March Revolution, would already have risen to 2·94, and by the end of October 1917, just before the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, it had reached between 9 and 10.

Before the November Revolution, however, this decline in the purchasing power of the rouble was quite insignificant as compared with its vertical fall during the first years of the Bolshevik rule. After the November *coup d'état*, the new Government had no other source of revenue than the issue of paper money. By January 1, 1923, the total issues of Soviet paper money already attained the astronomical figure of 1,994,000,000,000,000 roubles. On March 1, 1924, it reached the equivalent of 809,600,000,000,000,000 roubles. By this time the purchasing power of a million Soviet roubles was equivalent to that of a two-thousandth part of one pre-war gold kopeck.[1] This situation was practically the death of the Soviet rouble. The Government was faced with the necessity of attempting to create a new and stable currency, although the economic plight of the country was little favourable for such an experiment.

In February 1924 the Soviet Government annulled all the rouble notes in circulation and issued a new "stable currency" called "chervonetz roubles," which was an issue of paper money, backed by a relatively weak reserve of gold and of foreign currencies. The value of the new currency unit was intended to correspond to the gold content of the pre-war rouble, and was therefore equivalent to 51·46 cents of the pre-Roosevelt American gold currency.[2] Yet from the following year, however, the small reserve of gold and foreign exchange held by the State Bank began to come to an end owing to the wholesale issue of chervonetz roubles. The amount of chervonetz paper money in circulation was increased from 640,000,000 roubles on January 1, 1925, to 1,482,700,000 roubles

1 The pre-war Russian kopeck corresponded approximately to the English farthing, or to half an American cent of that period.

2 The chervonetz roubles exist in the dual form of banknotes and Treasury certificates. Under the Soviet decree of October 1922, the banknotes issued by the State Bank were to be covered to the amount of 25 per cent, by precious metals and foreign currencies, and for the remaining 75 per cent by readily marketable goods and short-term securities. Under the decree of February 5, 1924, the authorized issue of Treasury certificates was limited to 50 per cent of the chervonetz banknotes in circulation. By a later decree, however, dated August 1, 1928, the Bank was allowed, under certain conditions, to exceed that limit. The official return of the notes in circulation is published very irregularly. On April 1, 1935, they amounted to 3,978 millions in banknotes and 3,500 millions in Treasury certificates, without counting 400 millions in small silver and copper coins.

on January 1, 1928. Early in 1926 the exchange of the latter against foreign currency was suspended and the purchasing power of the new Soviet money at once began to fall.

Monetary circulation did not cease increasing throughout the period of the First Five-Year Plan. On January 1, 1929, the amount of paper money issued was 1,821 million chervonetz roubles. By July 1, 1933, it had already reached 6,533 millions.

Nevertheless inflation alone would have been obviously insufficient in itself to ensure the maintenance of the vast labour army. If the workers and employees had been supplied with food in proportion to the purchasing power of the constantly further depreciating rouble, it is certain that a great proportion of them would have simply died from starvation. But what was to be done to provide food for those who could not produce for themselves? Only by buying from the producers, and adjusting the prices accordingly.

Industry and the Villages

This question automatically leads to another. We know that light industry was disorganized during the First Five-Year Plan. How, then, would any exchange of manufactured goods and agricultural produce continue between the industry and the rural food producers? Unable to offer the peasants anything in exchange for their produce, how could the Government obtain cereals and raw materials from the villages with which to feed the town population, the industrial centres, and the Red Army, in addition to exporting large quantities of foodstuffs to pay for foreign supplies in regard to the work of industrialization?

Here we reach the principal author, as well as the principal victim, of the Soviet achievements. It was the Russian peasant, in fact, who saved Stalin's industrialization. He did it under compulsion and it cost him very dearly.

Rural Areas Before the Collectivization

Before the Revolution of 1917 peasant ownership was in a stage of transition, as has already been previously explained. Communal ownership was gradually giving way before individual ownership. There were areas (North-West and South Russia) where the great majority of the peasants had become the owners of their holdings. In others (Central Russia) the bulk of the peasant land was still held in communal ownership. Yet even under the communal

tenure of land, no collective forms of agriculture existed. The land was shared out among the households, in other words, families, and each cultivated its own lot for its own account. Such was the position in the communal lands which formed the bulk of the peasants' land holdings.[1] Besides, the individual peasants owned quite a substantial amount of land as freehold. This freehold land was, of course, exploited for the exclusive benefit of their proprietors. The peasants neither knew—nor even imagined—anything else except the individualistic method of farming and were attached to this deep-rooted system of exploitation. When, therefore, after the Revolution, they seized the landowners' estates, they immediately divided them up among themselves, each family in this way adding a new plot to its particular holding. This non-collectivized use of the land, individualistic in its essence, was general among the peasants until 1929.

Collectivization of the Rural Areas. The Kolkhozes

From 1929 onwards, the Soviet Press reported the news that individual farmers, repudiating their petty-bourgeois instincts, were rallying to the banner of Socialism. In 1930 this conversion to Marxism was said to have assumed a wholesale character and to be noisily winning the whole country. It was said that, contrary to their individualistic instincts, they no longer strived to increase their individual holdings or to tighten their grasp over them, in the name of which, be it noted, the peasants had supported the November Revolution of 1917. It was alleged that they had suddenly decided to adopt cultivation in common and were organizing collective farms or *kolkhozes*, destroying all boundaries and pooling all their individual holdings into one huge field, with the object of working it jointly, with the aid of tractor-machines promised and supplied by the Government.

In a fit of self-denial unparalleled in history, it was announced, they had handed over to the *kolkhozes*, for the benefit of the collectivity, their horses, cows, sheep, poultry, pigs, carts, and implements. Nothing was left in the peasant homesteads. In Sholokhov's novel, *The Virgin Soil Upturned*, the sovietic author gives the following description: "The mangers are empty, the gates are thrown open to everybody; not a cock's voice is heard throughout the long night. Until daylight there is nothing to tell what time it is."

1 See Chapter I, "Russia before the Revolution of 1917," p. 30.

The progress of collectivization is illustrated by the following comparative table, giving the numbers of peasant households collectivized into *kolkhozes*, and also non-collectivized peasant households[1]:

Years	*Number of Collectivized Households*	*Number of Non-collectivized Households*	*Proportion of Collectivization Per cent*
1928, June 1	416,700	24,095,300	1·7
1929, "	1,007,700	24,830,830	3·9
1930, "	5,998,100	19,417,600	23·6
1931, "	13,033,200	11,697,800	52·7
1932, "	15,055,100	9,428,000	61·5
1933, "	15,211,800	8,409,000	64·4
1934, October 1	15,867,700	5,868,900	73·0

In proportion to the surface sown, collectivization, during these years, has made the following progress[2]:

Years	*Non-collectivized*	*Kolkhozes*	*Sovkhozes*
		In 1,000 *hectares*	
1928	109,890·5	1,366·9	1,735·0
1929	111,621·0	4,152·9	2,273·8
1930	85,210·7	38,080·9	3,926·2
1931	46,354·3	78,972·2	10,958·3
1932	29,453·9	91,533·3	13,447·5
1933	21,909·9	93,644·6	14,138·8
1934	17,807·1	98,556·3	15,109·9

In the percentage of the total sown area the progress of collectivization is thus expressed:

Years	*Non-collectivized Per cent*	*Kolkhozes Per cent*	*Sovkhozes Per cent*
1928	97·3	1·2	1·5
1929	94·6	3·5	1·9
1930	67·0	29·9	3·1
1931	34·0	57·9	8·1
1932	21·9	68·1	10·0
1933	16·9	72·2	10·9
1934	13·5	75·0	11·5

1 *Socialist Agriculture (Sotsialisticheskoie Zemledelie)*, June 1, 1936.

2 "Farming Industry in the U.S.S.R." *Yearbook* for 1935 (Moscow, 1936, p. 203). During the period 1928–1934 the increase in the number of *kolkhozes* was as follows:

1928, June 1	33,258
1929, "	57,045
1930, "	85,862
1931, "	211,100
1932, "	211,050
1933, "	224,500
1934, October 1	234,660

Socialist Agriculture, June 1, 1936.

Even Stalin's closest associates and supporters had not ventured to anticipate such a rapid collapse of non-collectivized peasant farming. The Soviet Press has tried to represent the success of collectivization as the result of a conscious movement of the peasants towards Socialism; the facts, on the contrary, show beyond all doubt that the collectivization of the villages has been carried out solely by a terrible compulsion on scores of millions of Russian peasants.

Victims of Collectivization

The history of Soviet collectivization has still to be written. We do not know the exact number of peasants who paid dearly for their attempts at resistance. For the time being we have to be content with approximate figures. In a speech at the VIIth Congress of Soviets,[1] Molotov, president of the Council of the Commissars of the People, declared that in 1928 the number of *kulaks* (well-to-do and thrifty peasants) totalled 5,618,000. By January 1, 1934, there remained of this number only 149,000 individuals, dispossessed of their modest resources. The other 5,469,000 peasants formerly in more easy circumstances have been compelled to leave their villages, and a certain proportion of them, declared as "outlaws," have simply been exterminated or condemned to perish.

Molotov's figures, however, understate the actual number of victims of Stalin's collectivization policy. The loss of human lives was not limited to those who were executed "for belonging to the *kulak* class." To these must be added all those who died of starvation owing to the harshness of the economic policy of the Government, for the famine of that period was not due to bad seasons.

From the report of the Soviet delegation to the Genoa International Conference (1922), we learn that in Russia in 1921, "despite the considerable aid of the American Relief Administration, three million people died of starvation." But we do not know how many millions or hundreds of thousands of people died from hunger in 1931 and 1932. There was no one to count them. During the period of industrialization, accounts were kept of the consumption of oil, zinc, copper, pig iron, etc., but no account was kept of the waste of human lives. There is no official information concerning deaths from starvation during the last few years. The fact itself, although formerly violently denied by the Bolsheviks, has now been officially

1 *Pravda*, January 29, 1935.

admitted, as regards 1933, and is to be found notably in the *Pravda* of December 5, 1935, and refers to the Kuban region.

Harry Lang, a well-known contributor to the New York Jewish paper *Forward*, on the basis of information gathered by himself in Soviet Russia, states that in 1932–1933, in some districts of the Ukraine and White Russia, about 40 per cent of the population perished during the famine.[1] Similar information regarding the German settlers in the Northern Caucasus and elsewhere is supplied by the German relief organizations. These bodies estimated that the number of famine victims in 1933, among the German colonists alone, totalled 140,000.

These fragmentary data are corroborated by the official figures referring to the number of peasant households, or family holdings, which disappeared between 1929 and 1937.[2] Stalin's compulsory collectivization was not only characterized by the fusion of the old family farms into *kolkhozes*, but was also accompanied by a considerable reduction in the total number of peasant households. The Soviet Press has paid no attention to this fact, which nevertheless reveals with great accuracy the real meaning of collectivization:

Years	*Total Number of Peasant Households*	*Years*	*Total Number of Peasant Households*
1929, June 1	25,838,000	1933, June 1	23,620,800
1930, „	25,415,700	1934, October 1	21,736,600
1931, „	24,731,000	1935, July 1 ..	20,903,100
1932, „	24,483,100	1936, July 1 ..	20,413,900
		1937, April 1	19,930,600

Now, in 1928, prior to compulsory collectivization, the total number of peasant households in the country amounted to 24,512,000, which proved irrefutably that their progressive decrease began only at the end of 1929, simultaneously with collectivization. By the middle of 1932 they had decreased by 1,354,900, which gives an average annual reduction of 452,000 units. From 1932 to 1933 the drop was already one of 862,300 units; from 1933 to 1934, 1,884,200 units; from 1934 to 1935, 833,500. Altogether, the diminution in households, or peasant families, amounted since the beginning of collectivization (from June 1929 to April 1937) to 6,907,400. It was

1 Lang's series of articles, dealing with his visit to the U.S.S.R., appeared in *Forward* for February 19, 1936, and the following numbers.

2 *Socialist Agriculture*, June 1, 1936, and November 7, 1937; *Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture*, November–December, 1937, p. 228; *Planned Economy*, August 1937, p. 52; *Economic Problems*, February 1937, p. 98.

in 1933 and 1934 that the villages suffered the most: from June 1932 to July 1935 alone 3,580,000 households have disappeared.[1]

At present an average Russian peasant family consists of 4·8 persons of the two sexes.[2] On the basis of this figure well over 30,000,000 people, male and female, have been eliminated from the Russian countryside since the intensive "building up of Socialism in one country alone" has been started. The growth of industry has certainly enabled a proportion of the uprooted peasants to settle down to some kind of employment in the towns. It is possible that, during the first years of collectivization, the main influx of the rural masses, victims of Stalin's economic policy, gravitated towards the urban districts, but from 1932 onwards the decline in the rural population far exceeded the increase in the town population. For the period from June 1932 to July 1935 alone the reduction of the rural population amounted to about 17,000,000 persons. Those were the awful years during which famine played havoc with the peasant population of the Ukraine and the Caucasus, and when hundreds of thousands of *kulak* families were banished to concenration camps in North Russia and Siberia.[3]

Loss of Live Stock

The cost of collectivization was great, not only in human lives, but also in economic wealth, of which large quantities were de-

1 In his already quoted book on Stalin (p. 480), Boris Souvarine estimates that by the beginning of 1931 at least 5,000,000 peasants, who were opposed to collectivization and described as *kulaks*, had been ejected from their homes and doomed to destitution and death. Souvarine's figures do not go beyond 1931. On the other hand, statistical data used in this book show that the years which followed were particularly devastating to the Russian country-side.

2 According to the *Results of the Execution of the First Five-Years' Plan* (Moscow, 1933, p. 253), the collectivized *kolkhozian* households and the non-collectivized households in aggregate counted in 1932 117,200,000 people (out of a total rural population of 127,400,000, the difference—about 10 millions—accounting for the non-peasant rural population, including the former peasants now employed as workers by the *sovkhozes*). On the other hand, *Socialist Agriculture* of June 1, 1936, states that the aggregate number of collectivized and non-collectivized households on June 1, 1932, was 24,483,100. It follows that each such household comprises on the average 4·8 persons.

3 W. H. Chamberlin, who was for many years an American newspaper correspondent in the U.S.S.R., writes: "I was reliably informed . . . that there were about 300,000 prisoners in concentration camps in Siberia alone. . . . The total number of Soviet citizens who, during the four years (of the Five-Year plan), have been deprived of liberty without anything that could plausibly be called 'due process of law' can scarcely be less than two million." (W. H. Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age*, Boston, 1934, p. 157.)

stroyed. Losses were particularly heavy in respect of live stock. The animals taken from the peasants and placed in the *kolkhoze* stables and cowhouses were left uncared for and perished in millions. On the other hand, the compulsory deliveries of meat to the State necessitated the slaughtering of young cattle and sapped the very bases of stock-raising.

Live stock mortality was still further aggravated by the requisition of the peasants' grain stocks by the Government, a practice which in 1929 was followed on an exorbitant scale,[1] and left insufficient fodder to feed the cattle. During the season of ploughing and other field-works, vital for the country-side, food was lacking for the horses. Finally, the peasants often preferred to kill their last horse, cow, or sheep rather than to yield to pressure and hand them over to the *kolkhoze*.

At the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party Stalin gave figures showing the decrease of live stock.[2] The picture revealed was terrifying.

HEADS OF LIVE STOCK

	1929	*1933*
Horses	34,000,000	16,600,000
Cattle	68,100,000	38,600,000
Pigs	20,900,000	12,200,000
Sheep and goats	147,200,000	50,600,000
	270,200,000	118,000,000

These figures differ from the official statistics, which must be presumed to be more accurate. They also confirm the catastrophe which befell stock-breeding in Russia. The slight improvement which occurred in 1934–1935 did not succeed in attenuating the general plight into which stock-breeding fell under the régime of forced collectivization.[3]

	1928	*1932*	*1934* (*in million head*)	*1935*	*1936*
Horses	33·5	19·6	15·6	15·9	16·3
Cattle	70·5	40·7	42·4	49·3	52·4
Pigs ..	26·0	11·6	17·4	22·6	32·2
Sheep and goats	146·7	52·1	51·9	61·1	60·3
Totals	276·7	124·0	127·3	148·9	161·2
Cows (as included above) ..	30·7	21·0	19·5	20·1	21·5

1 On the requisitions of grain, see pp. 294, 295 and 333–336.

2 *Pravda,* January 28, 1934.

3 "Farming Industry in the U.S.S.R.," 1935 *Year Book,* p. 217. *Planned Economy*' 1937, No. 3. The figures are taken at the end of the years cited.

The Five-Year Plan of 1928[1] forecast an increase in live stock: of horses by 6,000,000 heads, of cattle by 14,000,000, of pigs by 12,000,000, and of sheep and goats by 28,000,000, or a total increase by 60,000,000 heads. Instead of increasing, the live stock experienced during the period 1929–1934 a loss of 149,400,000 heads through slaughtering, starvation, etc. This was one of the reverse sides of compulsory collectivization. The value of the live stock and of the commercial products drawn from live stock (wool, milk, butter, etc.), thus lost, greatly exceeded the value of the newly built gigantic industrial plants. The Soviet Government filled one pocket, but allowed the contents of the other to slip through the holes.

Consequences of the Ruin of Stock-Breeding

What were the economic consequences of the destruction of stock-breeding?

"In Soviet Russia," proclaimed Kuibyshev, "the mechanization of agriculture has reached such a level that, in this respect, Soviet farming has become the most advanced in the world."[2] The table below shows the number and aggregate power of the tractors used in the whole of agriculture, both in the *kolkhozes* and in *sovkhozes*, which latter, it may be remembered, are State farms employing wage earners.[3]

	Tractors *Units*	*Aggregate Power*
1928	24,500	254,700
1929	26,700	278,100
1930	34,900	391,400
1931	72,100	1,003,500
1932	125,300	1,850,000
1933	148,500	2,225,000
1934	210,900	3,209,200
1935	276,400	4,462,800
1936	380,000	6,527,000
1937 (August 1)	450,200	8,302,800

This imposing picture, too, has its reverse side. According to data published by *Farming Industry in the U.S.S.R.*[4] there were, in pre-war Russia, in addition to several million draught oxen,

1 *Quinquennial Plan of* 1928, vol. ii, p. 333. 2 *Pravda*, January 12, 1935.
3 *Planned Economy*, 1937, No. 9–10, p. 95. In 1932 there were only 14,100 "combines," while in 1936 their number had risen to 85,400. (*Planned Economy*, 1936, No. 12, p. 144.)
4 "Farming Industry in the U.S.S.R." *Year Book*, 1935, p. 217.

35,100,000 horses and in 1928 the number was still 33,500,000. After the collectivization in 1932 the total fell almost suddenly to 19,600,000. In 1934 the lowest level was reached, with a total of 15,600,000, which rose slightly the next year to 15,900,000. Thus between 1928 and 1935, inclusive, the number of horses in the U.S.S.R. diminished by 17,600,000 or 52½ per cent. The working capacity of a horse is generally taken in this country to amount to 0·5 h.p. This coefficient would certainly be understating the working capacity of the more powerful Western European horses, but seems to be true for the average strength of the common soviet horse, especially if allowance is made for the deduction of these animals not used for farm work. This being so, the capacity of horse-traction in Russia as a whole declined as follows:

1916	17,500,000 h.p.
1928	16,700,000 h.p.
1935	7,900,000 h.p.

The loss of horses since 1928 has thus resulted in a reduction in the traction capacity by 8,800,000 h.p. In 1929–1931, 279 million gold roubles' worth of tractors were bought abroad, chiefly in the United States. Large sums were spent in the installation of three tractor construction plants (in Stalingrad, Kharkov, and Cheliabinsk) and of two agricultural "combine" plants (in Saratov and Zaporozhie). Nevertheless, the Soviet Government by 1935 did not make up for the loss of 8,800,000 h.p. horse traction incurred. The importation and home output of tractors amounted only to 4,462,800 h.p. All the progress made in motorized farming still left a net loss of traction power equivalent to 4,337,200 h.p. The U.S.S.R. prides itself in having become the first country in the world as regards "mechanization of agriculture," but when a peasant wants to go to town to sell his produce at the market, or to take his ailing wife to a hospital, he has no means of transport: all the horses belong to the *kolkhoze*, which has not enough of them for the most urgent field work.

Still more serious was the effect of the destruction of stock-breeding on the food, clothing, and boots of the population. The disappearance of nearly 30 million head of cattle in the course of five years resulted in a heavy falling off in the output of milk and butter. The loss of live stock also meant a shortage in the production of meat. In 1928, when animals were increasing in number, the

market was supplied with 3,611,000 tons of meat. In 1934 the Commissariat for Food Supply, which is the principal provider of meat, had only 430,000 tons of meat to offer for sale. Assuming at the utmost that the same quantity was sold directly by the peasants in the local markets or supplied by other public organizations, the largest amount delivered for sale could not be more than 1,000,000 tons, or 3·6 times less than in 1928.

The decline of stock-breeding also heavily prejudiced the leather and clothing industries. The reduction of the flocks of sheep and goats to one-third of what they had formerly been involved a corresponding falling off in the supply of wool. Under these circumstances, and in this respect, how can the Government fulfil its promise to increase two and a half fold the supply of the principal articles of large consumption under the Second Five-Year Plan, and as from the beginning of 1937?

We certainly, however, do not mean to suggest that consumption by the Soviet masses can in no way be increased. It is nevertheless true that the mania for super-industrialization has inflicted a terrible blow on Russian agriculture, and sapped its very foundations. The bases of the supply of foodstuffs and raw materials weakened, and at present the country lacks sufficient resources to furnish the normal food supply of the nation. If the Soviet Government wants rapidly to restore the economic situation of its nationals, it must resort to importation of articles of large consumption, instead of entrusting this task to a third or a fourth Five-Year Plan. Such a step, unfortunately, has little chance of being taken.[1]

How was Rural Collectivization Carried Out?

The extraordinary rapidity with which the Soviet Government succeeded in accomplishing the collectivization of Russian agriculture can be easily accounted for, though the explanation will be quite different from the one given by the Soviet Press.

In 1929–1931, tens of thousands of men armed with automatic revolvers were sent from the towns into the villages. They carried out Stalin's programme of "annihilating the *kulaks* (peasants in comfortable circumstances) as a class" and compelling the terrorized mass of the other peasantry to "rally to Socialism."

1 In July 1936 the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, Rosengoltz, declared that in the matter of foreign imports "it is indispensable to maintain strictly the line we have followed before." (Rosengoltz, *The New Conditions of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1936, p. 14.)

Before the collectivization, the social composition of the rural areas was more or less as follows:

	Per cent	Per cent
Poor peasants	—	25·7
including village proletariat ..	5·3	—
peasants disposing of very little land	20·4	—
Medium peasants (*seredniaki*)	—	66·4
Well-to-do peasants	—	7·9

According to other data,[1] 10 per cent of the total number of peasant farms belonged to the well-to-do peasants, who possessed, in 1927, 32·5 per cent of the entire area sown by the peasantry; 60 per cent were represented by the medium peasants, holding 61 per cent of this surface; and the remaining 30 per cent were poor peasants, who held only 6·5 per cent of this same surface. Among the most prosperous 10 per cent, not all were *kulaks*; that is, not all employed hired labour, even irregularly. The authors of the Five-Year Plan estimated the number of real *kulak* farms as not more than 4 per cent of the total. The remaining 6 per cent belonged to thrifty and hard-working peasants who knew their business; in short, farmers of the type whom Lenin hoped to make "central figures" of the agricultural revival. Whether we estimate the number of poor peasants at 25·7 per cent of the total number, as the first series of the above figures suggests, or at 30 per cent according to the second series, or whether we regard them all as partisans of collectivization—which would be very exaggerated—it cannot in any case be denied that the overwhelming mass of medium and well-to-do peasants constituted an absolute majority of the country, and that they were opposed to collectivization. Yet, in spite of all, collectivization was carried through.

The will of the majority gave way before the will of the armed minority. The peasants bowed before a dictatorial compulsion which aimed at creating a new life.

The Communist novelist, Panferov, in his novel *Brusski*, has very well described the state of mind of those who put collectivization into effect: "We must beat the idea of property out of man," they said, "just as dust is beaten out a of mattress. Since the peasant is trying to bargain with us, let us knock this wish out of his head. . . ." "To prevent the peasant from fixing himself solidly on the land, as the rook does his nest, we must talk to him the language of guns, and dynamite every farm, together with its builder." It's a

1 *The Five-Year Plan of 1928*, vol. ii, pp. 270–71.

good thing we have but few steady households, well established on their land, like those they have in Europe. "This makes it easier for us to lead the peasants along the road we want." He is resisting and doesn't come into the *kolkhoze*. "What shall we do with him? Hit him on the head, and make him see too many stars to bother us overmuch. Have no pity. Life hasn't any. Get it well into your head that you are not settling a personal quarrel. When you are fighting the peasants, you must be rough, wicked, and as unfair as you can be."

Acting in obedience to instructions from the Kremlin, the collectivizers attacked first the peasants who were the best off, the 10 per cent who had an extra sheep, a plough in good working order, a well-run farm. They were ruthlessly swept away, expropriated, evicted from their dwellings. Some of them were murdered; the great majority were banished to the penal camps of the Arctic North or to Siberia. Their fate was shared by hundreds of thousands of other peasants who were guilty of having more or less shown opposition to collectivization. The village proletarians and the needy peasants, on the contrary, were drawn upon to furnish the 2,250,000 petty functionaries required to officer the *kolkhozes*, as chairmen, members of the boards of directors, foremen, etc. Thus was created the skeleton of the administrative machinery which, from 1934, ruled and managed 235,000 large collective farms formed by the grouping of about 16,000,000 small individual private holdings, representing a total population of 70,000,000 souls.

Under the Red Terror, the medium peasants, or *seredniaki*, were made to surrender to the *kolkhozes* their horses, ploughs, and carts, in order to escape the threat of being treated as *kulaks* and perish in banishment. This class was the principal source of labour for the new *kolkhozes*. History records no similar large-scale social transformation. It threw the nationalization of industry and transport completely into the shade.

Kolkhozes the Principal Source of Public Revenue

This compulsory collectivization of farming under the *kolkhoze* system provided Stalin with the primary means he needed for the industrialization of the country.

Formerly, the peasants managed their own farms as they thought fit, and paid over to the State in the form of taxes a part of their yield from their labour. Now it was the State which, with the aid

of 2,250,000 petty officials, managed the collectivized farms which had absorbed the lands of the peasants, and arbitrarily fixed the share to be given to the latter. Previously the peasants had tilled their own fields. Now they cultivated collective fields. Formerly, they were independent of everybody in their tiny sphere and attended freely to their own business. Now they were obliged to work in the *kolkhoze*, to be enlisted in brigades commanded by the brigadiers, and to carry out plans laid down by the Government. Before the *kolkhozes* came into existence—in 1928, for example—the Soviet Government by sending soldiers throughout the country-side was not able to take from the peasants more than 576 million poods of grain (over 9,250,000 tons) a year. In 1931, when 13 million peasant households had already been collectivized, the Government, in spite of a bad harvest, took 1,400,000,000 poods (over 22,500,000 tons), or two and a half times as much. Now that the peasants are bound hand and foot to the *kolkhozes*, not a single bushel of grain can escape the central authorities. The *kolkhozes* spread all over the country have proved to be an unparalleled revenue-collecting machine, which unfailingly pumps from agriculture all that can be needed for the development of intensified industrialization.

In an address delivered at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on January 7, 1933, Stalin glorified the victories won by Socialism in the rural districts. "The Communist Party by its powerful will," he said, "has within barely three years organized over 200,000 collective farms. The success attained is such that the *kolkhozes* now comprise 60 per cent of the former peasant farms, representing over 70 per cent of the superfices of the entire peasant land in Russia. The Party is to-day able to harvest every year between 1,200,000,000 and 1,400,000,000 poods (or 20,000,000 and 22,500,000 tons) of cereals, as compared with only between 500,000,000 and 600,000,000 poods (or 8,000,000 and 9,750,000 tons) in the period when individual peasant farming was predominant. The Party has succeeded in annihilating the *kulaks* as a class, although they have not yet been definitely exterminated. The Party has succeeded in transforming the U.S.S.R. from a country of small-scale peasant farming into one in which agriculture is organized on the largest scale in the world. The road back to the old individualistic forms of farming has been definitely closed. Our task now is to make the *kolkhozes* really Bolshevik."[1]

1 *Pravda*, January 19, 1933.

Government Exactions Through Kolkhoze System

Deprived of their land and implements, the peasants were no longer able to exist except by working in *kolkhoze* fields, and the Government has exploited their labour without worrying as to their adequate remuneration. On the other hand, it has taken from the *kolkhozes* wheat, rye, barley, wool, meat, milk, butter, eggs, etc., but the *kolkhozes* have not only been obliged to make deliveries in kind (*zagotovki*).[1] In 1930–1931 the development of industry demanded huge supplies of additional labour. From what source was this to be drawn? Workers were leaving factories and workshops to devote themselves to political or administrative posts. "The old industrial workers have been dispersed," wrote a Soviet paper. "Some are doing party work; others are engaged as administrators, managers, head of factories, plants, and State farms. By the will of the Revolution the former workmen have been placed in commanding positions. Only a handful of them, not more than 10 per cent or 15 per cent, seldom 20 per cent, have survived in each factory."[2] Thus, at the Dneprovsk metallurgical plant there were practically no old and experienced workmen left. "The metal workers have deserted their trade. They are at the head of rural Soviets and *kolkhozes*, communal undertakings and co-operatives, railway centres and steamship lines."[3]

It was necessary to replace the hundreds of thousands of workers who had left factories to become administrators. Even several millions of additional workers had to be recruited. At first the Government made an appeal to the women in the towns. "Women's labour," we read in a noted Soviet book, "has become one of the main sources from which industry could draw fresh supplies of workers. During the earlier years of the First Five-Year Plan there were about six million housewives in the towns. All the local Communist organizations received orders to call up these reserves and attach them to production."[4] It was not difficult to persuade the women. The drop in the purchasing power of the rouble, the scarcity and dearness of everything in the markets made it impossible for families to subsist on the mere wages of their menfolk. By the sheer force of things women and boys and girls were obliged to go into the factories. As a result of this pressure, which the Soviet Press

1 About these compulsory deliveries, see pp. 201 and 300.
2 *For Industrialisation*, February 19, 1931. 3 Ibid., March 20, 1931.
4 Shabalova, *Women Are a Great Force*, 1935 edition, p. 32.

described as "the emancipation of women from depressing domestic atmosphere," millions of women became factory hands and clerks. The number of women working in various branches of national economy rose from 3,877,000 in 1930 to 7,881,000 in 1935[1]. But women's labour could not make up for the enormous shortage of manual labourers. The peasantry eventually furnished the millions of new workers required by industrialization. From the Government point of view, all the human reserves in the country who were fit to work were regarded as conscriptable at any moment and for any purpose. Thus, according to a decree promulgated by the Government Labour Department, dated February 11, 1931, the *kolkhozes* had to place at the Government's disposal, during that year, 2,662,000 workers to be supplied by them proportionately. The ground floor of the vast Soviet economic structure was thus entirely filled by peasants who had been drawn from their villages, or had fled from compulsory collectivization. Under administrative pressure, peasants were sent to cut down and prepare timber in forest camps, to dig in the peat bogs, to labour in the fisheries, in the construction works, and on the railways. Others were put to work on phosphate deposits, in the Donetz coal mines and in those of far-off Karaganda, in the copper and other mines in the Urals and in Central Asia. Workers for all kinds of factories were also wanted, and many of the most complicated machine tools which had been imported at heavy cost were entrusted to the clumsy hands of totally unskilled village lads who had never touched other mechanical tools than their antiquated wooden ploughs. It was not

1 Women's employment statistics for different categories of labour are as follows:

	1929	*1930*	*1932*	*1935*
		(in thousands)		
1. Industry, transport, commerce, building	1,375	2,006	3,741	5,026
2. Agriculture	441	425	394	685
3. Institutions	961	1,134	1,593	1,978
4. Domestic servants and day labourers..	527	312	279	192
Totals	3,304	3,877	6,007	7,881

This table is based on the figures drawn from the statistical year book, *Labour in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow, 1936, p. 25.) Visitors to the U.S.S.R. have observed that young women and girls perform there the kind of work which is usually reserved for men, because of the risks it presents or the effort it requires. They are employed, for instance, to work in mines, in sewers or in the manipulation of pneumatic drills, which are notorious for their effects on the nervous system.

surprising that the costly lathes broke down, and that every workshop was strewn with wrecked machinery.

In 1932 the National Defence Minister, Voroshilov, declares that: "After having visited several plants, I now understand why our new undertakings function so badly. The reason is, that the men called upon to handle the machinery had not the least notion of any machine until a month or two ago. They are peasants. Smeared with oil and dirt, they look proletarian enough, but in reality they are lacking of all skill." Among the freshly recruited labour in 1931 peasants comprised the following percentages: in machinery engineering in the Ukraine, 52 per cent; in metallurgy, 60 per cent; in machinery engineering in Leningrad, 61 per cent; at the Moscow automobile plant, 67 per cent; in metallurgy in the Urals, 71 per cent; at the "Sickle and Hammer" machinery manufacturing plant in Moscow, 72 per cent; in the coal-mining industry of the Donetz basin, 82 per cent.

Kolkhoze Practice and Marxist Ideology

The result was fantastic. According to Marxist teaching—which is the official creed of the Soviet State—the socialistic régime must be built chiefly by the efforts and labour of the industrial proletariat. Exactly the contrary occurs in Soviet Russia. The factory proletarians abandon manual labour and machine tools to become party officials, directors of industrial and commercial concerns, managers of communal undertakings, of *sovkhozes* and of *kolkhozes*, of railway and steamship lines, chairmen of urban and of village Soviets, etc. Their places in industry are taken by peasants, who not only sow, reap, feed the towns, supply grain and raw materials for industry and export, but also, disguised as proletarians and "smeared with oil and dirt," fulfil the proletariat's functions in all the fields of industrial activity.

Internal Life of the Kolkhozes

Imposed by force, and against the wishes of the vast majority of the peasants, collectivization sometimes led, inside the *kolkhozes* themselves, to the practices which would have been possible only at the time of serfdom, and even then only under the most iniquitous landlords.

The *Pravda* itself at times castigates the heads of the *kolkhozes* for

their attitude towards the peasants under their charge.[1] The ill treatments in question, however, were only the logical outcome of the unspeakable humiliations to which the great majority of the peasants were subjected at the time of the ferocious compulsory collectivization, which went so far as to despoil them of their horse and even of their very fowls, under the plea of bestowing on the country-side the benefits of the large-scale Socialist farming.

Lenin, writing in 1921, spoke of the "scoundrels" who had "perpetrated dastardly and scandalous acts of violence" against the persons of peasants, and submitted them to "degrading humiliations." In Lenin's opinion "such conduct deserved a purging by terror; a trial on the spot and an immediate execution, without useless arguments."[2]

If Lenin had still been living during the collectivization, he would have had to shoot hundreds and thousands of Communist collectivizers, for that policy was based solely and entirely on a profound contempt of the peasants' will. The "miracle" of the instantaneous transformation of millions of small rural landowners into Socialists would not have occurred but for the disgraceful acts of violence which brought it about.

Earnings of Kolkhoze Farmers

True to its motto, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat," the Government compelled the peasants to work in the *kolkhozes*, in

1 *Pravda*, of May 17, 1935, reports that in a *kolkhoze* called "In Memory of Illitch" (Lenin), in the village of Lomakino (province of Nizhni-Novgorod), a particularly hard plot of land was being ploughed for the first time. Owing to the lack of horses the big plough was being drawn by eight *kolkhozian* peasants. "The men," says *Pravda*, "were kept ploughing throughout the whole day, and neither their brigadier nor the managers of the *kolkhoze* saw anything extraordinary in this inadmissible humiliation of human dignity. The local organizations of the Party themselves were equally indifferent."

In its issue of April 12, 1935, the same paper reports the facts of another incident of the same kind. "In the village of Zhouk, in the Urals, Pomaskin, the president of the local Soviet, was robbed of 110 roubles. His suspicions fell on a sick young girl named Nadezhda Motorina, her eleven-year-old brother, a little girl of seven named Sukhorukova, and other children who frequented the house. Pomaskin arrested them all, locked them up in a cold barn, and whipped them several times. He was particularly furious with Nadezhda Motorina. Not satisfied with thrashing her, he took her to the river and plunged her into the icy water. To frighten a confession from her, he persuaded his friend Titov to take a gun and fire in her direction, taking care, however, not to hit her, but to aim over her head. As even this failed to extort a confession, he again locked her up in the cold barn, where she was discovered dead three days later."

2 Lenin's *Complete Works*, vol. xxvi, p. 347.

the fields, market gardens, stables, etc. The least they might have expected would have been to be placed on the same footing as the workmen; that is, to receive fixed wages and to benefit from the eight-hour day, a fortnight's annual holiday, and all the other advantages conferred by Soviet social legislation upon the industrial workers. It was not to the interest of the Government, however, to introduce fixed wages in the *kolkhozes*, and the Government created for their usage a new system of remuneration, based on so-called "labour-days." Each day's work in the *kolkhoze* was estimated—in accordance with the quality and amount of work performed—as the equivalent of from one-half to two "labour-days."

"Labour-Days" and Distribution of Products

The "labour-day" on which the remuneration of the peasant's work is based has nothing in common with wages. The peasant's remuneration represents a very indefinite quantity of benefits to which a peasant may be entitled after he has performed all the duties imposed on him. The *kolkhoze* is not destined to satisfy the peasants' personal needs. According to Stalin's formula, a *kolkhoze* is "a common undertaking destined for the satisfaction of the needs of the community as a whole."[1] In keeping with this principle, the State begins by requisitioning (under the name of *zagotovki*) its own demands on the crops and live-stock products, such as grain, sugar beet, meat, milk, wool, cotton, flax, hemp, vegetables, tea, tobacco, etc. The share of the State is determined in advance, according to a scale established per hectare for the various regions, and is settled at a fixed price, which is arbitrarily low.[2] Whether the crops be good or meagre, they are required to furnish the same fixed amount. After these obligatory deliveries to the State, other levies are effected in a prescribed order, such as those for the next season's sowings, the fodder fund for common flock and herd, a special fund to ensure payments in kind for the use of tractors and other machines supplied by the State; the fund from which to pay the cost of milling at the State flour mills, the reserve for insurances, etc. All these obligations must be scrupulously discharged. Whatever may remain of the harvest after all these deductions constitutes the profit available

1 *Pravda*, March 12, 1935.

2 How very low "the special State prices" paid to the peasants for the produce requisitioned by the State are as compared with the prices at which this produce is sold by the latter to the consumers will be seen in Chapter VII, pp. 335–336 and 359–362.

for the members of the *kolkhoze* and is divided among them in kind proportionately to the number of "labour-days" credited to each. In the more favourable cases, however, when the remainder available is sufficiently large, the management—instead of distributing it all—may be able to sell a certain quantity of products directly to outside consumers.

Only a comparatively small portion of the compensation due for "labour-days" is settled in cash. The compulsory deliveries made to the State, as well as sales which may have been effected to consumers, provide the management of the *kolkhozes* with ready money which, to a large extent, if not entirely, is absorbed by the payment of State taxes and insurance, and thereafter by all the operating and administrative expenses of the *kolkhoze*. Finally 10 per cent of the monetary profits of the *kolkhoze* is added to a permanent reserve fund. What is left, if any, is distributed among the members of the *kolkhose* in accordance with the number of "labour-days" to which they are entitled.

Thanks to this system, the Government—while declaring itself the sole owner of the soil—turns over to the peasants the entire risk of agricultural exploitation as well as the care of providing the means for the realization of vast "socialist" projects. At the same time the Government is relieved from any worry as to the payment for agricultural labour, and may be little concerned by the question of supplying the rural areas with manufactured goods in exchange for their products.

Since collectivization was applied, the best products of the peasants' work—either in a raw state or after having undergone industrial transformation—has been exported, in order to pay for the machinery and other industrial equipment bought abroad. On the other hand, the output of the *kolkhozes* has served to supply with foodstuffs the industrial workers and town dwellers, divided into several categories of consumers, each furnished with supply cards. In 1934, 40,300,000 people were fed in this way.

Owing, however, to the complexity of the system and the defective working of the cumbersome bureaucratic machinery, this method of distribution of foodstuffs frequently suffered breakdowns. People had to wait hours in queues in order to obtain a loaf of bread, while all free trade was prohibited and the markets remained closed. In face of the facts, the Government had to admit that the problem of food supply had not been solved by the supply-card system. Consequently, from 1929, the Government began to organize

throughout the country restaurants, eating-houses, a whole State network of feeding in common. In 1928, 240,000 people were nourished in this way. In 1932 their number rose to 16,200,000, of whom 70 per cent were workers. The food supplied by these canteens was atrocious. Gruel, generally badly cooked, cabbage of poor quality, potatoes spoiled by the frost, were a constant feature of the menus. "We cannot feed people in human fashion," wrote the well-known Soviet writer Gladkov. "The canteens are a nightmare, a sheer mockery of the people. I go to a factory kitchen and I feel sick at the mere sight of the frightful food. I go to works where the food is brought in thermos flasks. This blue broth stinks of corpses and cesspools. The workmen prefer to be contented with only bread and water!"[1] This vivid picture of factory kitchens and canteens for the masses is no exaggeration, and yet the urban and industrial population did not die out. The mere fact that there existed any sort of food distribution at all to supply-card holders and that bad food, but at reasonable prices, was furnished to them from a common stock-pot, gave them the strength to build a gigantic industry. The whole system, of course, had its basis in the *kolkhozes*, whence foodstuffs were mercilessly extracted, sometimes to the very last potato. The industrialization of Soviet Russia was thus built up on the malnutrition of the workers, the employees and, above all, of the peasants. Stalin's achievements cost the country very dear: the cruel privations which arose from them caused the loss of an incalculable number of human lives.

What, then, has been the real value of "successes" bought at such a price? Did all these heavy sacrifices, these sufferings, this misery, effectively contribute to the realization, if only approximately, of the Five-Year Plan, which was to have been the reward of it all?

Real Results of the First Five-Year Plan

Contrary to the beliefs of misinformed people, the First Plan as approved by all the highest authorities of the U.S.S.R. was never translated into practical facts. The ideas, the forecasts, and the objects of the Plan drawn up in 1928, and its alleged realization in 1929–1932, were two profoundly different things.

The 1928 Plan forecast an increase of from 15 to 20 per cent in the purchasing power of the rouble. In reality its value appreciably decreased. The Plan proposed to "liquidate the shortage of com-

[1] Gladkov, *Power*, p. 375.

modities within five years, it being understood that signs of improvement in the market for industrial articles will already be seen during the last three years of the Five-Year Plan."[1] Instead of this, towards the close of the Plan period, there was an incredible shortage of commodities in the market, and the population lived under material conditions which were much more serious than in 1928. The Plan promised an increase of 69 per cent in real wages "to double the average distribution of a whole series of the most important articles of large consumption."[2] Instead, a rigorous system of cards was applied; foodstuffs and other merchandise were sparingly rationed; and queues of four hours to secure a piece of badly baked rye bread could be seen everywhere. The Plan was to have decreased by 19 per cent, if not by 22 per cent, retail prices for industrial articles, and those of agricultural products by 20 per cent, instead of which there was an enormous rise in all commodity prices. The Plan was based on the assumption that the cost of industrialization would be covered chiefly by industrial profits. It was assumed that during the five years there would be a drop in building-cost price by 41 per cent and of industrial costings by 35 per cent, as the result of better management of industries, their reconstruction and rationalization, the introduction of new machinery, and an increase in the output of labour, due to the conscientious efforts of a personnel whose real wages should increase from year to year. From the reduction of industrial wholesale prices alone a profit of 12,000 million roubles was expected, which would cover largely the greater part of funds expended. All these hopes, however, remained unfulfilled. The cost of production did not decrease; where it did not increase, it remained stationary. There was a steady drop in real wages, taxes on consumption became exorbitant, and the requisition of agricultural produce alone enabled industrialization expenditure to be met. The 1928 Plan at no period and in no text stipulated for total and simultaneous collectivization. It foresaw that, by the end of the five-year period, 85·6 per cent of the peasant farms would still remain un-collectivized, and that they would only become associated in various forms of co-operation, as had been Lenin's thesis. The Plan did not contain a word as to the annihilation of the better-off peasants and of the obligatory collectivization of the "medium" peasants, for it had always been understood that this would be brought about by means of various

1 *The Five-Year Plan of 1928*, vol. i, p. 104. 2 Ibid., vol. i, p. 105.

"measures of encouragement" and that it would above all be the poorer farms which would be absorbed into *kolkhozes*. Instead of all this, Stalin in 1929 launched his Communist armies on the countryside to "destroy the *kulaks*" and switch the average peasants on to the "rails of Socialism." Why this change of attitude?

The Aims of the Five-Year Plan as Understood by Stalin

In his address to the cadets of the Military Academy—at the Kremlin, in May 1935—Stalin said: "We have had comrades who have said to us: 'What is the good of your industrialization and collectivization, your machines, your metallurgy, your tractors, your combines, your automobiles? Why don't you rather give us more manufactured products, buy more raw materials for the manufacture of articles of large consumption, and give the people more of those little things which beautify their daily lives? Backward as we are, the creation of a first-class industry is a dangerous dream!' "

"Of course," Stalin resumed, "we could have expended on the import of raw materials, and on the manufacture of necessary commodities, the three thousand millions of gold roubles which we obtained at the cost of severe economies, and spent on the creation of our industries. That would have also been a plan of its kind, but under such a plan we should have had no metallurgy, no machine engineering, no tractors, no automobiles, no aviation, no tanks. We should have found ourselves disarmed before a foreign enemy. We should have undermined the foundation of Socialism in our country! We should have become the captives of our own and of the foreign bourgeoisie!"[1]

Knowing that no one would dare to contradict him, Stalin was pleased to draw a crude caricature of the attitude of his defeated opponents. In reality, there were no "comrades" to question the utility of the industrialization in course. Nor were there any "comrades" to assert that the country had no use for metallurgy, and that "the creation of a first-class industry" was "a dangerous dream." The whole controversy was not about the goal to be reached, but about the most expeditious way of reaching it. Three possible ways of attaining that objective had been suggested.

The first, which was the initial idea of the First Five-Year Plan,

1 *Izvestia*, May 6, 1935.

led to industrialization by the simultaneous and parallel development of the output of means of production (i.e. heavy industry and machine engineering) and of the manufacture of articles of large consumption. This would have been the ideal way, that of the growth of heavy industry keeping pace with the improvement of the material situation of the masses.

The second way demanded the preliminary development of the most important branches of the light industry as well as of the food industry, with, as immediate consequence, the stimulation of agriculture, which in its turn would secure a solid foundation for the creation of heavy industry and machine engineering.

The Two Conceptions of the First Five-Year Plan

Finally, there was a third way: to build up in the first place and at an accelerated speed the heavy industry and that of the construction of machines; to obtain this result at all costs, at the price of the hardest sacrifices and by all means and all methods, even by reducing the nation's food supply to famine rations. In such a programme compulsory collectivization of agriculture was to provide the principal resources for intensive industrialization of the U.S.S.R. It thus became the essential element of the entire Plan, which tended towards the immediate "establishment of Socialism in a single country."

It was upon this third path, henceforth associated with the name of Stalin, that Russia set out. This new conception was grandiose by the demands it required in technical and human means, and was co-ordinated with the distribution of the country's productive forces and natural wealth. Yet, it has little to do with the main features of the First Five-Year Plan, as approved by all high authorities of the country. True, in Europe and in America statesmen never dream of a 100 per cent realization of their projects. They are perfectly satisfied when their anticipations are fulfilled to the extent of 70 per cent. Stalin, on the contrary, was determined from the outset to attain "super-industrialization" and did not consider himself limited to the projects proposed in the official Five-Year Plan.[1] This is easily demonstrated.

What were, in fact, the objectives to be accomplished under the

1 We have described in Chapter V that atmosphere of internal dissension which developed in the heart of the Party when Stalin demanded the adoption of his personal economic plan—a real "fighting plan."

First Plan? and what had been actually achieved from October 1, 1928, to January 1, 1933, that is in the four and a quarter years, at the end of which its complete fulfilment was officially proclaimed?[1]

Non-Fulfilment of the First Plan in Respect of Light Industry and Food Industry

The Plan comprised that production of articles of large consumption (i.e. products of light industry and the food industry) would be increased to a value of 25,100 million roubles (at 1926–1927 prices) by October 1, 1933. In spite of all biased complacency and statistical artifices recurred to, the sovietic authorities were unable to show that actual output during 1932 could be valued at more than 16,600 million roubles or more than 17,600 millions in 1933. In other words, there was a shortage amounting to 34 per cent in 1932, and to 30 per cent in 1933. Considering that the quality of the products had undoubtedly deteriorated, the deficiency was still more serious.

The Plan was based on the assumption that, in exchange for abundant supplies of goods for consumption, the peasantry would greatly develop the production of agricultural products. This expectation was not fulfilled as the following table shows:—

GROSS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION[2]
(in million roubles and based on 1926–1927 prices)

	Year's Cultivation	*Stockbreeding*	*Total*
1929	9,058·9	5,685·7	14,744·6
1930	9,601·7	4,405·9	14,007·6
1931	9,850·8	4,092·9	13,943·7
1932	9,779·2	3,292·6	13,071·8
1933	11,054·2	2,962·4	14,016·6
1934	11,307·7	3,283·3	14,591·0

The First Five-Year Plan assumed that the total output of agriculture would rise from 16,600 million roubles in 1928 to 25,800 million roubles in 1933. Actually it only reached the figure of 14,000 million roubles, or 2,600 million roubles behind the 1928 figure, and far below the provisions of the Five-Year Plan. According to the official Soviet statements, the years 1933 and 1934 yielded record crops. As a matter of fact, the gross production of agriculture was considerably below the 1928 level, owing to the destruction of live stock due to compulsory collectivization.

1 From 1931 the calendar year was again used for economic planning and accounting, instead of a year running from October 1 to October 1.

2 *National Economy Plan for 1935*, p. 227.

Over-Fulfilment of the First Plan in Respect of Heavy Industry

Exactly the contrary occurred in the heavy industries; that is, in the output of means of production. According to the provisions of the First Five-Year Plan, it was supposed to attain in 1933 an amount of 18,100 million roubles. The actual figures were:[1]

Years	*Means of Production*
1930	14,737 million roubles
1931	19,092
1932	22,185
1933	24,629
1934	29,900

While the deficit in production of articles of large consumption amounted to at least 30 per cent, and in those of agriculture to over 50 per cent, as compared to the Plan, the output of the means of production exceeded the figures foreseen by 34 per cent in 1933, and by 68 per cent in 1934. This disproportion was monstrous. It once more demonstrated that the industry of means of production was developed in the U.S.S.R. to the detriment of the national consumption—which fell off more and more—and at the cost of the ruin of agriculture.

In what field was the fulfilment of the Plan exceeded? Naturally, in machine engineering—in the production of machine tools, motors and motor cars, aeroplanes and tractors, rolling-mills, turbines, locomotives, machines for the timber industry, etc. According to the most ambitious variant of the First Five-Year Plan, the metallurgical industry was called on to produce, in 1933, for a value of 5,800 million roubles at 1926–1927 prices. Estimated on the same basis, its actual output in 1934 was officially returned as having had a value of 13,400 million roubles.

1 *National Economy Plan for 1936*, 2nd edition, Moscow, 1936, p. 392.
The *Plan* (1936, No. 17, p. 46) contains the following table of the actual growth of heavy industry in percentage of the 1928 figures:

Years	*Total Industrial Output*	*Output of Means of Production*	*Output of Consumers' Goods*
1928	100	100	100
1932	230·3	280	186·1
1935	362·9	475·6	264
1936 (six months)	446·6	599·6	306·7

Industrialization and Soviet Armaments

One important factor must now be emphasized. Behind the enormous development in Soviet machine construction lay Soviet military preparations which provided for a greatly increased technical equipment of the army. The creation of new departures in mechanical construction contributed to "lay excellent foundations on which to build all the technical appliances for modern warfare."[1] The armaments and the technical means of the army were immensely increased, at the same time as its effectives. During the period 1930–1934, the number of machine guns in the light infantry and cavalry regiments was more than doubled, while in the aviation and in the tank sections they were multiplied sevenfold. The strength of the heavy artillery was doubled and the number of light and heavy tanks increased in the proportion of one to seven. The Soviet air force in 1935 consisted of 4,300 aeroplanes,[2] which represented an increase of 330 per cent. The number of submarines was augmented by 450 per cent, of torpedo motor boats by 370 per cent, and so on.

Such an increase in military expenditure imposed heavy extra burdens on the population; but the Soviet leaders, in the person of Tukhachevsky, the Deputy Commissar for Defence, still propagated the fable that in the U.S.S.R. "military expenditure constitutes only 10 per cent of the total State Budget."[3] The obvious reason for such an assertion was the desire to dispel the legitimate misgivings of foreign workers, and to prove to them that the Soviet Union had not fallen into the sin of militarism. The explanation, however, was not a very convincing one. The bulk of the Soviet military expenditure was not accounted for in the Red Army budget, but under the industrial estimates. The giant new plant at Berezniaki, in the Urals, is intended for the production of chemicals and manures for peace-time use, but is also called on to manufacture poison gases. The huge works at Cheliabinsk turns out caterpillar tractors for agricultural purposes, but also produces tanks for the army. The same situation applies to a great number of other

1 From the speech of Marshal Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defence. (*Pravda*, March 6, 1933.)

2 Since that time the number of aeroplanes must have very much increased. It is believed that the seventy-four aeroplane factories of the U.S.S.R. are now producing annually around eight thousand planes. (Haudan, *Das Motorisierungspotential der Sowjetunion*, Hamburg, 1937, p. 54.)

3 Tukhachevsky's speech at the VIIth Pan-Unionist Congress of the Soviets in February 1935.

industrial concerns. Motors, for instance, which are constructed under the industrial budget, are really destined for the air force.[1]

Standard of Industrial Technique

No estimate of achievement can be complete unless quality as well as quantity be taken into account. No matter how indulgent one may be towards the Soviet Government, it must be recognized that "the Five-Year Plan accomplished in four years," which cost the population so dearly, was accompanied by a senseless and wholesale waste of material means.

The men of the Kremlin never ceased to insist that the objectives of the Plan must be attained before the dates fixed by it, and that the new plants should be brought into operation as speedily as possible. The constructors, under this continual harassing, frequently handed their work over before it was completely finished and ready for operation. The disastrous consequences of this haste were aggravated by the ignorance of the Communist supervising officials in technical matters, by the continual interference of irresponsible organizations and by the lack of professional training on the part of the work-people.

From hundreds of examples, it will be sufficient to take as an instance the circumstances of the putting into operation of the new zinc plant at Konstantinovka. The report of the event was published a year later, in the journal of heavy industry.[2] "At the moment the plant was declared open," this official publication stated, "only 45 per cent of the construction work had been completed, and the various operating departments were in such varied degrees of readiness that it was absolutely impossible to forecast when the plant as a whole would be able to start, even at a reduced capacity." Nevertheless, the triumphal inauguration of the new plant was not delayed. The deplorable consequences soon became manifest. "Barely a year after the opening the plant was in a worn-out state that only dozens of years of regular work could have brought about. Many repairs had already been effected, but these still leave the essential parts of the plant half demolished. The mechanically operated roasting furnaces are stripped of all their accessories and

1 As we have seen before, a special commissariat was created in 1937 for the national defence industry, but this does not prevent that industries not especially serving the needs of the military forces and governed by the general industrial commissariats also work for national defence.

2 *For Industrialisation*, April 4, 1932.

are nothing more than ordinary ovens, of the kind worked by hand. The distillators, which, according to the Plan, should have a working life of from three to five years, were worn out at the end of three to four months, and had to be reconstructed nineteen times. The whole of the equipment of the ceramic shops (stampers, pulverizers and presses), etc., is deteriorated and more in need of replacement than repairs. The small caterpillar trucks, used for transporting materials inside the plant, have been thrown on the scrap heap and replaced by rails and rolling-carpets. Electric wagons, used for carrying the retorts, have also become unserviceable. What, then, have the engineers and technicians been doing? How could they have allowed such vandalization of the plant? They have not been allowed to say a word. When they have tried to make it understood that all the distilling apparatus should not be put into operation as long as the auxiliary shops are not ready, and to point out that blunders which had been made in the plans for the plant should be rectified, they were treated as opportunists and wreckers. Those who have had the courage to complain against the orders of a technically incompetent administration have been reprimanded, dismissed, or transferred to other jobs for which they were not qualified. The technical staff and foremen, snubbed and terrorized, were unable to organize production, which was their proper function, and had to remain silent and impotent witnesses of all the scandals of which the plant was the scene."

Absence of Estimates and Squandering of Funds for Construction Works

This example is by no means an exception. Scores of new plants were put into operation in similar circumstances. Their actual construction was often carried out in a deplorable manner. None of the builders paid attention to estimates or prime costings. On this subject the President of the Council of People's Commissars declared at a Pan-Unionist conference: "It would seem to be the most elementary thing in the world that when one decides to build, one should first of all have an estimate. No capitalist would ever start building a single factory or a single plant without first obtaining an estimate of what it will cost him. Tell me, comrades, have you any building estimates?"[1]

1 *For Industrialisation*, February 2, 1931.

The Socialist constructors required no estimates. They spent, squandered, wasted the people's money without troubling to count it, without the bourgeois scruples of counting, economizing, and keeping within reasonable limits. At the time of the construction of the metallurgical plant at Magnitogorsk "nobody knew the cost of the work." The man responsible for the construction of another giant enterprise, the metallurgical plant at Kuznetsk (now Stalinsk), did not hesitate to declare, with a certain audacity: "If you ask us how much money we have spent, you will get no answer. The State Bank alone can furnish the reply. Our habitual method is to build at any cost, whatever it may be."[1]

It is obvious that this "Socialist" conception of public property rendered building "easy, quite easy." State enterprises and contractors borrowed from the State Bank as much as they needed, without any security, "on account of the Plan." The State printed paper money, and simply gave it away, without even opening a regular account. The People's Commissar for Finance, Grinko, admitted towards the end of 1931 that men responsible for Soviet economic organizations drew no distinction "between the finances of their enterprises and the funds of the State Bank, between their own funds and capital which they borrow."[2] According to the same authority, State enterprises and building undertakings had established between them a current practice of "automatic crediting on account of the Plan and of global payments through the State Bank of the price of all materials furnished, no matter whether the buying administration had the means to pay the selling administration or not."[3]

While in this country, poor in capital, the necessary means were obtained only by compressing consumption and by despoiling the peasants of their crops, there existed such a bacchanalia of uncontrolled expenditure that a bourgeois American engineer, Austin, who worked in 1931 at a plant at Rostov, reproached the Soviet officials with "throwing money out of the windows, as if they wanted to show what a lot of it they had."[4]

1 *For Industrialisation*, February 5, 1931.

2 As late as 1935 heavy industry enterprises existing without a State "subsidy" were rare exceptions.

3 *Izvestia*, December 30, 1931.

4 Squandering of funds for construction has not ceased to continue, as will be seen from the following statement made in 1938 on the spot, at Magnitogorsk, by Joseph Barnes, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who gives a striking example of the operations which the Bolsheviks attribute to the ill will and criminal machinations of the "Trotzky-Bukharin wreckers." In this town, which

"Gigantomania"

In this squandering of money there was another feature worth noting. During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, the Soviet leaders contracted a mania for the gigantesque. They dreamed, by day and by night, of plants, which in size would surpass those of America. Every new plant had to be "bigger than the greatest in the world." The sovietic newspapers went so far as to say that an engineer who refused to be prevented from carrying out his projects by having to suppress a mountain, to fill gorges, to demolish a factory in operation, or to pull down whole streets of inhabited houses was to be considered in the U.S.S.R. as a great constructor. The reckless squandering of efforts and capital which resulted from this obsession of the gigantic, may well be illustrated by the case of the agricultural machinery plant in Rostov-on-Don. Contrary to all considerations of economy, to all harmony and to all rational system, the buildings and workshops were scattered over a surface of 650 acres. The worshippers of the gigantic were ravished by it. What, on the contrary, did an American engineer, named Wolf, who worked at that plant, say about its construction: "You have intentionally spread your plant over 650 acres," he said; "instead of normal distances between the workshops the men have to go along veritable broadways. You have wasted uselessly enormous quantities of glass, cement, timber, and iron. With the materials which you have used for a single house we should build four in America. I would undertake to build your plant, by tender, for a fee amounting to 25 per cent of the savings to be made were the construction properly conducted. That 25 per cent would bring me so much money that I should not know what to do with it."[1]

To justify giving gigantic dimensions to its new undertakings, the Soviet Government officially declared that they conformed with rationalized technique and economic foresight. As a matter of fact,

has been entirely constructed by the efforts of exiles, in a region previously a wilderness, two large gasometers have been erected with a capacity of 100,000 and 50,000 cubic metres, imported from Germany, and whose price was 2,500,000 gold marks, or about a million dollars. The author of the communication remarks that at the time of this purchase each dollar represented a certain quantity of food less for the population. After the erection of the gasometers, somebody thought fit to ask for what temperature they were intended, and it was learned that it was 5° Fahrenheit, whereas the thermometer regularly descends, every winter, to —49° Fahrenheit at Magnitogorsk. (*New York Herald*, Paris Edition, March 10, 1938.)

1 *For Industrialisation*, January 18, 1931.

such expectations have more than once proved false. The case of the huge State farm in Northern Caucasus called the "Giant" is typical in this respect. Its size was so great that the distance to be covered by the workers to reach their place of work caused costly loss of time. In many cases they could barely arrive there before having to hurry back before nightfall! In the end this giant farm was split up into a number of separate agricultural undertakings.

This mania for the gigantic in the various branches of production, and even in the erection of "skyscrapers," however, was less inspired by erroneous technical views than by a preconceived and rather naïve admiration of everything done in America, and on a desire to "outdo" America, and thus to impress the masses both at home and abroad.

The building of "skyscrapers" in New York was necessitated by the restricted surface of the narrow peninsula of Manhattan. In the United States there are a number of conditions which favour great industrial concentration and allow it to function successfully. The advantages that the U.S.S.R. can derive from mass production can surely not be denied. Quite to the contrary. The huge size of the home market, in addition to many other factors, certainly drives Russia in this direction. However, the fact cannot be blinked that Russia is not yet in a position for the functioning of immense units such as is the case in the United States. The U.S.S.R. lacks America's exceptional transportation facilities, her greater density of population, especially in certain districts, not to speak of her abundance of cheap capital, etc. In a general way, the American scale is yet an economic vaguery for the U.S.S.R.

This point has been duly noted by one of the leading French industrialists, M. Ernest Mercier, in his book on his visit to Russia, which appeared in January 1936. He speaks of the tendency "which, without any practical or philosophical necessity, aims solely at colossal, super-American dimensions, with the idea of inspiring in the public the proud feeling of belonging to the nation which is, socially and technically, the most advanced in the world. This tendency accounts for the projected Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, which is to be 450 metres high."[1] As to the Moscovite mania for the gigantic in industry, M. Mercier says: "In Russia, one should refrain from too great concentration of production which first necessitates the transportation of raw materials or semi-finished goods, and

1 Ernest Mercier, *U.S.S.R. Reflexions*, Paris, 1936, p. 26.

afterwards, the much more onerous, difficult, and risky transportation and distribution of finished articles. . . . It is certain that the failure to recognize this law, or its too belated recognition, will lead to much disappointment."[1] It was still more contrary to the interests of economic and technical rationalization to combine into one single business-unit important industrial centres separated from each other by distances unknown to Western European scales. By how much has the cost of production at the Stalinsk (formerly Kuznetsk) and at the Magnitogorsk plants been swollen from the mere fact that they have to exchange the coal of the former against the ore of the latter across a distance of over 2,500 kilometres (1,560 miles)?

There can be no doubt that if the industrialization of the U.S.S.R. had not been accompanied by such senseless waste, the economic oppression which it imposed on the people, and above all on the Russian peasants, would have been appreciably less severe.

Pre-Capitalist Methods of the Soviet Government

Stalin may perhaps have been right when he said that "the miracle of the East," such as it was, would have been impossible "on the basis of capitalism and of individualistic economy." It would never, in fact, have been possible to extract so heavy a feudal tithe from the peasants without first having imposed on them the constraint of the *kolkhozes.* The most ruthless capitalism could not have done it. Believing that they have plunged into Socialism, the Soviets have really revived the methods of the pre-capitalist era.

When the Bolshevik Government could not longer delude itself with the results of the First Five-Year Plan and had to admit the failure of its alluring dream, it was obliged to slow down the pace of industrialization.

Slowing Down the Pace

By the spring of 1932 the strained nerves and muscles of the population could no longer stand the tension. Signs of famine were apparent everywhere. The exhausted peasants would not and could not toil more. Forty per cent or more of the grain rotted in the fields. Sugar beet perished unharvested. Cotton made white patches on the ground where it had been abandoned. The people died, as did their cattle. The land was no longer tilled, but only superficially scratched. Weeds, the height of a man, throttled the harvests. Sheaf-

1 Ernest Mercier, *U.S.S.R. Reflexions*, Paris, 1936, p. 73.

binders could not carry the weight of sheaves which "contained more grass than wheat." Tractors broke down in the fields and the drivers could do nothing with them in spite of the threat of being imprisoned for as much as three years, which was the period inflicted in the event of a second breakdown, in accordance with a decree of the Central Executive Committee of February 13, 1931. Transport was equally disorganized. Loadings were effected with extreme slowness. The enfeebled transport workers failed to comply "with traffic exigencies, as laid down by the Government," in spite of the decision of the Central Executive Committee to sentence with ten years' imprisonment those who infringed labour discipline.[1]

The yield from labour was declining day by day. In the plants and factories the instability of the hands had become incredible. In some undertakings the whole of the work-people were changed five or six times during a year. Industrial plants were no more than public thoroughfares, through which surged a constant flow of people. Coercive measures, "social dams," as they were called, were alone capable of retaining them for a short while in a given factory. Hosts of workmen wandered throughout the country in search of their food.[2] For the same reason many of them did not go to their work at all. Catastrophe seemed imminent. The masses reflected: "We cannot and we will not continue any longer to live and work like this!" Everywhere, in all the factories and the *kolkhozes*, in every corner passive resistance became more and more sullen. Panferov very rightly wrote in his novel *Brusski*, "Tens of millions of people, scattered all over the country, were swollen with threats." Stalin's Government realized the danger. It could no longer remain blind in front of the vast movement, instinctive and without organization, among the workers and peasants. This movement had not been provoked by any political party or precise programme. It was due to the elementary explosion of poverty and exhaustion. In its effort to increase the country's capital equipment, the Govern-

1 *Economic Life*, January 21, 1931.

2 The following figures drawn from Soviet statistics show the percentage of dismissed or of absconding workers in the whole of large-scale industry, the average number of workers employed being taken at 100:

	Per cent		Per cent		Per cent
1923	101·9	1930	152·4	1935	86·1
1928	92·4	1932	135·3		

Although on the decrease since 1932, the instability of labour is still abnormally large.

ment had over-estimated the country's reserve of strength. Up there, in the Kremlin, the haughty and exhilarating illusion that there were "no fortresses that the Bolsheviks could not take," had begun to dissolve. It became clear that a retreat was inevitable and that the sooner it began the better. It began to be realized that it was no longer possible to preach the "speeding up of the pace"; to uphold in the Second Five-Year Plan such high aims as were set forth in the First; to make people live as wretchedly as under the First Plan; in a word, to stake on the unlimited patience and docility of the masses.

From the Cult of the Machine to the Consideration for the Human Being

Prior to these revelations, consideration of human beings and human feelings had been prohibited. When the Government became alarmed at the decrease in the number of horses, it had issued decrees that care should be given to mares; but no practical solicitude had been shown to men.

In the autumn of 1932 all the Soviet newspapers suddenly discovered that "in the giant industrial plants, workshops, State farms (*kolkhozes*), canteens—everywhere, in fact—care of human beings had been overlooked," and that this was wrong. Until then, the word "food" had not been allowed to be mentioned. "Consumption," the Soviet Press declared, "must be subordinated to the interests of production." At the same time, on the eve of the fifteenth anniversary of the November Revolution, *Pravda* stated that "it was time to put an end to bureaucratic negligence and the aristocratic disdain with which questions concerning the food of the masses are treated," and to realize, at last, that there is no more honourable task for a Communist than the improvement of the lot of the workers."[1]

Until then, the sole function reserved to the youthful generations was to act as "shock battalions" in the production of copper, steel, pig iron, iron ore, oil, etc. They were not to yearn for the gratification of their personal wants, for a piece of soap, a tie ("a useless rag around your neck"), a hat, some flowers, a more comfortable room. In Panferov's *Brusski*, already cited, one of his heroes, the Communist Zakhar readily accepts this situation: "We are manure. We are fertilizing the soil, in order to breed a new nation. Look at

1 *Pravda*, October 2, 1932.

me. I am a victim. Yes, I offer myself as a sacrifice and I don't cry my eyes out because I haven't got any trousers. Everybody must sacrifice himself—some of their own free will, and others under compulsion. You just refuse to be a sacrifice, and we'll twist you like a ram's horn."

In the immense monastery, under the sign of industry, which Holy Russia had become, the youthful generation had been transformed into a sort of community of ascetic monks, who devoted themselves to stifling the voice of the flesh. This monkish doctrine has now been renounced. In June 1932 Kossarev, the leader of the Young Communists, declared that people were "wrong to imagine that we are the adversaries of personal well-being, of well-furnished rooms, of personal cleanliness, of fashionable clothes and well-made shoes, or that we destroy personality and individual aspirations. . . We hate neither music, nor love, nor flowers. We are not ascetics, and we do not preach asceticism."[1]

Ever since 1929 it had been impressed on the country that a gigantic new industrial plant and a ton of metal or coal were more important and of greater value than a human being; that men were entitled to food only to the extent by which they carried out the construction schemes and the plans for the production of copper, iron, zinc, and coal. From 1929 onwards it had been dinned into people's ears that they should do their utmost to develop heavy industries and build giant plants, even at the cost of their lives. That, they were told, was Socialism. Since 1929 the country had sunk deeper and deeper into misery and privation, lowered its standard of comfort, and reduced its needs. Henceforth, the country wanted to know whether these intolerable conditions were to last. It began to demand an answer to its query: Did misery and privation really represent the promised Socialism? The country could no more be told one of those formulae it knew by heart through having heard them hundreds of times during the period of the First Five-Year Plan: "We have constructed Socialism but a little more patience is still required, a little more hunger must still be endured." To such an answer the people would have been ready to cry out: "To the devil with your Socialism. What was the good of overthrowing capitalism if it meant only falling into a still more terrible hell?"

1 *Pravda*, July 7, 1932.

Stalin's New Dissertations

Stalin understood the seriousness of the moment. He realized that the old formulae would no longer suffice, and that he must find new ones. And, after a long silence, this is what he declared:

"It will have been in vain that we overthrew capitalism in November 1917, in vain that we have consecrated long years to the building up of Socialism, if we cannot now succeed in giving well-being to the people. Socialism means neither misery nor privation. It would be absurd to believe that Socialism could be built up on misery and privation, on the restriction of personal needs, and on the lowering of the standard of life to the level of pauperism. Moreover, we do not want misery among us any longer. Who then would have any use for such a caricature of Socialism? Socialism can be built only on the basis of a vigorous impulsion of the productive forces, of an abundance of goods and products, of an easy existence for the workers, and of a powerful rise of general culture. Socialism does not mean the curtailment of personal needs, but rather their multiplication and development. It is neither a limitation nor a renunciation, but, on the contrary, the total and entire satisfaction of all the needs of a culturally developed working nation."[1]

Little more than a year after this declaration, Stalin spoke again on the theme of "the human personality," which had been neglected during the period of extreme industrialization. In the already mentioned address delivered on May 4, 1935, before the Red Military Academy,[2] Stalin outlined his economic projects and emphasized that regard for the "human *cadres*" must be placed in the centre of the whole policy of industrialization. "The old idea that technique solves everything," he said, "belongs to a stage we have already passed. To-day we must have a different watchword. . . . In order to impart life to technique we must have men who are the masters of technique; we must have *cadres* which are capable of assimilating that technique and deriving the maximum benefit from it, according to all the rules of the art. The *cadres* will settle everything. Without men who have become its masters, technique is inert. . . . Of all the values that exist in the world, the men, the *cadres*, are the most precious and the most decisive."[3]

1 Extract from a report presented by Stalin to the XVIIth Congress of the Party, January 26, 1934.

2 See p. 304.

3 *Pravda*, May 5, 1935.

CHAPTER VII

The Results of the Bolshevik Experiment

Fluctuations of Economic Policy and Five-Year Plans

Since, as Stalin declared, "Socialism is neither misery nor privation," the whole policy of the First Five-Year Plan was condemned both from the moral and the material points of view. This new formula admitted implicitly the obligation of beating a retreat. Coming as it did from the "Master's" own lips, it was equivalent to a command.

How, then, was this retreat manifested?

In 1919–1920 private trading, the markets, the whole circulation of merchandise were officially suppressed in Russia, and replaced by "direct barter." By force of arms the Soviet Government carried off the peasants' grain, to feed the Red Army in the field and to supply, under a card system, the working population in the cities. In the delirium of mirages, this distribution of rations—which became a question of life and death, as in a beleaguered fortress—was taken for Socialism. Lenin was the first to recognize the truth and to point out that this fake Socialism did not contain an atom of real Socialism. "Any attempt to completely suppress private trade," he said, "would be an absurdity. It would be an absurdity because such a policy is economically unfeasible, and it would be suicidal because a party which attempted it would be doomed to failure."[1]

Nine years later the "absurdity" denounced by Lenin was repeated on a still larger scale. From 1929 onwards all free private trading was "padlocked"; private shops were closed; the markets were put under seal, and all the roads between towns and villages were patrolled by militia. "Direct Socialism barter" was again established. Cereals and other raw materials were taken by the authorities from

1 Lenin, *Complete Works*, 2nd edition, 1935, vol. xxvi, p. 333.

the *kolkhozes* and supplied to industry and to construction works, and distributed—by means of supply-cards—to the population. This "direct barter" between socialized industry and agriculture, now organized in "socialist" *kolkhozes*, was described as Socialism, and even as "developed Socialism" in the same manner as it had been some ten years earlier. "To create an economic basis for Socialism," said Stalin, "we must merge agriculture and socialized industry into a single economic whole, organize relations between towns and villages on the basis of the direct barter of products; close and suppress all the channels which," etc. In its turn, this system was destined to end in the "inevitable failure" predicted by Lenin.

General Sketch of Stalin's Retreat

In May 1932 Stalin was obliged to "unlock" the closed circle of trade channels, that is to say, to reopen the markets in order to preserve the towns from famine.

At that time the peasants no longer grew anything for their own account, except small quantities of potatoes, carrots, beetroot, and cucumbers, which they grew in some corner of their yards; practically everything was in the hands of the *kolkhozes.* But what little produce the peasants could spare, they would have been willing to take to the market. They had to get at least salt, petroleum, manufactured goods, and clothing. Theoretically speaking, their supply-cards were supposed to enable them to buy these commodities in the village co-operative societies and in the State retail shops, but in reality the needed articles were lacking, and in exchange for their produce the peasants could only obtain such things as eau-de-Cologne, playing cards, chefs' caps, and other remnants and superfluities. In May and June 1932 the opening of free markets was authorized, where the destitute Soviet citizens were able to buy, at competitive prices, things which had long been unpurchasable in the towns, and whose taste had even been forgotten, such as cabbages, carrots, onions, and beetroot. The Soviet newspapers did not fail to reproduce innumerable photographs of this "abundance" in the markets, as could be seen in any number of the *Pravda* during this period.

Once broken by the opening of the markets, the "closed circuit" system of trade could not be re-established. The Government even took a further step towards freeing trade, and began to organize

"commercial shops" where foodstuffs and other commodities were no longer reserved to holders of supply-cards, but were sold to all those having the necessary money, yet at higher prices than formerly to such holders. The next change permitted the *kolkhozes* to sell in the free markets—after the State had collected the specified compulsory deliveries in kind—the remainder of their production. The *kolkhozian* peasants were now also allowed to bring to the markets whatever they could save from the produce distributed to them by the *kolkhoze* as compensation for the "labour days."[1] Thus there appeared in the markets wheat, rye, flour, peas, etc., and not only the few onions, carrots, etc., coming from peasants' kitchen gardens. Unfortunately, the quantities of foodstuffs offered in the markets could not be large, as at least 35 per cent of the crops went to the Government. Out of the remainder, seed and food for the collectivized live stock was first to be put aside. As for the peasants, after having provided for their own needs, not very much was left out of their share of the *kolkhoze* distribution.

"Plots for Private Use" on Collectivized Farms

In February 1935, with the same intention of "unfettering" private initiative, the *kolkhozian* peasants were authorized to retain from the collectivized area a small parcel which they could cultivate for their personal consumption or even for private sales.[2] Unable to cope satisfactorily with the task of supplying food to the great mass of the population, the Government thus transferred a part of its responsibilities to the millions of peasant holders of tiny "plots for private use."

The history of these "private plots" is an excellent illustration of Soviet economic policy. In the early stages of wholesale collectivization, in December 1929, everything the peasant had was brought into the *kolkhoze*: farm, land, garden, orchard, large and small live stock. But Stalin had soon to admit that things had gone too far. This is the reason why, in his already mentioned article, "Dizzy with Success," Stalin tried to throw the responsibility for the complete annihilation of individual peasant-farming upon the excessive zeal of the subordinates entrusted with the application of collectivi-

1 Until then the *kolkhozian* peasants could offer this surplus, if any, only to the State, at the very low prices paid for the obligatory deliveries which would practically have yielded nothing.

2 See Chapter IV, pp. 198–202.

zation.[1] Nevertheless, it was not until two years later that the "one-cow decree" (promulgated in March 1932) authorized in fact the *kolkhozian* peasants to own a small amount of personal live stock, apart from the collectivized animals of the *kolkhozes*.[2] A fairly noticeable development of individualistic farming began only after the promulgation of the new *kolkhoze* statute, ratified on February 17, 1935, by the Council of the People's Commissars, and the Central Committee of the Party.[3] This statute explicitly accorded to each *kolkhoze* peasant family the right to a "plot for private use." As a rule, these lots should not exceed half a hectare (or one and a quarter acres).[4] In the spring of 1935 the total sown area of these "private plots" amounted to 3,000,000 hectares (or about 7,500,000 acres), averaging less than half an acre per family or household.[5] In the spring of 1936 it reached 4,000,000 hectares (or about 10,000,000 acres). It is unnecessary to state that the sown area of the "plots for private use" is less than their total surface, as the latter also comprises some unsown land. The same statute also lays down that each family in a *kolkhoze* can possess at the most one cow, two calves,

1 Stalin's article "Dizzy with Success" appeared in *Pravda* for March 2, 1930, and the first model *kolkhoze* statute was issued March 10, 1930.

2 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of March 26, 1932.

3 The statute was published in *Izvestia* of February 18, 1935.

4 See p. 202.

5 The whole sown area (not counting the plots sown with grass since the previous year) was distributed, in the spring of 1935, in the following manner between the different categories of farming:

	Hectares	*Or about Acres*	*Per cent*
Sovkhozes	14,400,000	36,000,000	11
Kolkhozes	102,100,000	255,250,000	80
Kolkhozian "plots for private use"	3,000,000	7,500,000	2
Non-collectivized peasants	9,000,000	25,500,000	7

Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture, 1935, No. 7, p. 200.

In the southern and eastern steppes of the U.S.S.R. there are immense *sovkhozes* which specialize in the breeding of sheep and other live stock, and have scores of millions of acres of pasturage at their disposal. At the end of 1934 the *sovkhozes* of the country covered a total area of 84,200,000 hectares (or over 210 million acres).

At the end of 1935 the Soviet Government began systematically transferring to the *kolkhozes* a large proportion of the land held by the *sovkhozes*. In 1936 the latter thus lost 17,000,000 hectares (or about 42,500,000 acres). By March 1937 the area thus lost had reached 22,000,000 hectares (or about 55,000,000 acres), representing over a quarter of the previous entire *sovkhoze* surface. This liquidation of the *sovkhozes* has been due to the fact that exploitation of these "great agricultural enterprises of an entirely socialist character" has been constantly in deficit.

one sow and her litter, ten sheep, and an unlimited number of poultry and rabbits, and up to twenty bee-hives.[1] Yet, in 1930–1931 peasants possessing half as much personal live stock as this were branded as *kulaks*, massacred, and sent into concentration camps. It needed the destruction of no fewer than 152,000,000 head of cattle to lead Stalin to change his views.

The reasons for the modest concessions thus granted to the peasants under the *kolkhoze* statute of 1935 were set forth by Stalin in a speech before the Council of the Congress of *Kolkhozian* "shock-workers" in February 1935, of which the text was not published until 1936. Among other things he said: "Some of you think that a *kolkhozian* peasant cannot be allowed to have a cow, and others that he should not have a sow. In fact, you want to make things hard for the *kolkhozian* peasant. That would be a mistake. If there is not yet abundance of produce in your agricultural collectivities, and you cannot yet give the individual *kolkhozian* peasants and their families all they need, that means that the *kolkhoze* is not in a position to satisfy both the requirements of the community at large and the personal needs of its members. Then it is better to say outright that there is a domain of labour for the commonwealth and another of private labour, and it must be made clear what the one is and what the other is. It is better to admit openly and honestly that, besides the collective exploitation of the *kolkhoze*, every *kolkhozian* household must possess a private exploitation, small but personal. It is better to start from the point of view that there exists a collective and social exploitation—large, important, and decisive—indispensable for the country's common needs, and, in addition to it, a small individual farming exploitation indispensable for the satisfaction of the private requirements of the *kolkhozian* household. As long as a family exists with children and personal needs and tastes, they cannot be ignored. You have no right to disregard the personal daily interests of the *kolkhozian* peasants. The co-ordination of the personal interests of the *kolkhozian* members with the service which the *kolkhozes* are called upon to render to the community will bring about the consolidation of the *kolkhozes*."

This speech of Stalin was very exactly understood, not merely as

1 These quantities were authorized by the new statute in respect of the purely agricultural districts. In the "mixed" districts—agriculture and stock-breeding—the statute authorizes from two to three cows and from two to twenty-five sheep per *kolkhoze* household. Finally, in the purely stock-breeding districts, from eight to ten cows, and one hundred to one hundred and fifty sheep are authorized.

emphasizing the right of the *kolkhoze* families to possess "private plots" for their own benefit, but also as a direct injunction to the *kolkhoze* authorities to support and encourage in every possible way these small individualistic exploitations. According as the latter strengthened, the *kolkhozian* peasants would be able to spare and take to market a larger amount of their produce. The admission of "plots for private use" and the authorization granted to the peasants to sell personally in the free market the production of these plots (as well as what they might spare from their *kolkhoze* distribution) is in the eyes of the Soviet power only a temporary concession to individualistic forms of economic activities. *Pravda of Communist Youth* of March 26, 1938, states that these concessions constitute a sort of survival of the *N.E.P.*, and should last only as long as Socialism was introduced merely "in its main lines."

Stalin did not limit to *kolkhozes* his new tendency towards admitting certain old-time practices. By January 1, 1935, the Government definitely abandoned both the "closed circuit" in trade and "direct barter" of products. It suppressed supply-cards and replaced this system of distribution by the simplest and most bourgeois form of trading, itself organizing the sale against money of the foodstuffs which it requisitioned from the peasants.

This renunciation of distribution by barter and by supply-cards, in favour of the sale of products to all comers who had money, naturally involved the question of the instrument of exchange, that of a stable currency. It was impossible to carry on trading in merchandise with a rouble whose value varied according to the category to which its possessor belonged or to the type of operation in which it was used. Until then its purchasing power was not the same in the markets, in the State commercial shops, in the centres where commodities were sold only to certain fixed categories of workers and employees provided with cards, nor in transactions between various State industrial concerns, etc. The Government, anxious to liquidate the legacy from the First Five-Year Plan, adopted a policy of revising prices, stabilizing the rouble, and bringing back the currency to its classical role.

Psychological Changes

The beginning of the economic recoil was accompanied by psychological changes in Soviet society. What happened in 1934 may be described as analogous to the sudden opening of a ventilator

in a stuffy room deprived of oxygen. Small as it may be, it nevertheless brings in a breath of fresh air. After five years' hypnotic sleep and dreadful nightmares, both the old and the young awoke to the sudden surprise that there were other things in life besides pig iron, sulphate of ammonia, enthusiasm about production and factories, no matter how gigantic they might be. People again perceived the sun, the springtime, the lilac in flower, and human love. They recovered the gift of smiling and of being joyous otherwise than when ordered "to look pleasant" for photographs to be sent abroad. They felt again the desire to wear fashionable clothes, to dance, to sit with their friends in a café. In 1933–1934 the Government started opening cafés and restaurants, allowing the young people to dance (which was unheard of during the First Five-Year Plan); paternally advising the Soviet citizens to cease being the "cavemen" of 1930–1932, to cut their hair and shave, and put on clean white collars. In 1935, fashion papers again appeared and a carnival took place in the Moscow "Park for Rest and Culture."

The extent of this regeneration could be judged from a multitude of small indications, imponderable but significant. The Soviet Government had always in mind the old Roman motto, "Bread and Circuses." If it could not always furnish bread, it had always been able, since the earliest days of the Revolution, to mobilize for the propagation of its ideas all the resources of Russian national art, from the opera down to the circus ring, without overlooking the platforms of clubs and country fairs. During the execution of the First Five-Year Plan, every spectacular means was used for the glorification of the *kulaks* as a class, and so on. The "Park for Rest and Culture" in Moscow was transformed, in 1931 and 1932, into a political arena, where incompetent engineers and lazy or inefficient workers were censured. On the platforms short plays were "unwound," to use a Soviet expression, on such subjects as the mastering of technique, the Bolshevik harvesting campaign, the way to overtake and outdo the industry of capitalist countries, the industrial plants under construction, etc. Loudspeakers in the avenues, orators in the Park discoursed on the same subjects. According to a resolution of the Moscow Soviet, the "Park for Rest and Culture" was not a place for "lounging," but "a forge for impressing Government instructions on the execution of the Five-Year Plan," a place where everything was subordinated to one or two themes for "wholesale propaganda." The Soviet newspaper *Light Industry*

relates that when some "comrade" in charge of the distribution of metal was asked in 1932 to allot a very small quantity of it for the manufacture of *balalaikas*,[1] he exclaimed indignantly: "I have my head full of locomotives and you pester me about *balalaikas*! There can be no question of *balalaikas*! We want the metal for tractors and machine parts! Refused!"

And now, three years later, we find the Government pontiffs insisting on the necessity for looking after the "human *cadres*," authorizing the sovietic man in the street to "live cheerfully," mirroring before him the attractions of "an easy existence," and finally, "unfettering," to a certain extent, the economic initiative of the individual. . . . All this appears to be a certain proof that the new state of mind in the U.S.S.R. was acting on the attitude of those in power.

This psychological change of the Soviet Government was strikingly manifested by the increasing use of the term "Soviet democracy." Whereas any dreams about any kind of "democracy" were only shortly before regarded as typical of the renegade *Mensheviks*, Bukharin, following Stalin's instructions, wrote in the *Izvestia* (May 1, 1936): "The new type of State, represented by the Soviet Government and the dictatorship of the proletariat, has passed through several periods of evolution. It now enters the stage of the rapid development of proletarian democracy. The active initiative of the masses is taking on aspects which are more and more numerous and vast. The best men—the leaders, the shock-workers, the *stakhanovists*, the heroes of the Soviet Fatherland—are now being selected by various methods. The restrictions which formerly existed in this respect, owing to class differences, are disappearing. This is the normal course of development of Soviet democracy."

The draft of Stalin's Constitution, published in June 1936, was incontestably a manifestation of this "Soviet democracy" talk. Its democratism was certainly as little real as the "individual liberties" which it proclaimed.[2] Under this new "Constitution" Stalin remains as much as ever the real dictator of the country, and his acts suffer no criticisms, despite all the promised "liberties." As a psychological symptom, however, Stalin's Constitution was a very significant event.

1 A small stringed instrument very popular in Russia.

2 An analysis of the new Constitution is given in Chapter IV ("Political and Economic Structure of the U.S.S.R.").

For a prolonged period the leaders of Soviet policy resolutely rejected "democracy," "universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage," "personal liberties," which they denounced as merely common "bourgeois prejudices." Yet these "prejudices," condemned by Lenin, and again recently by Stalin, entered with the new Constitution into the obligatory official phraseology, without having, for all that, penetrated practical life.

The abandonment of the old policy, moreover, involved certain innovations, which are no longer merely verbal but very real. A new attitude was adopted towards those who were formerly treated as "class enemies." Until quite recently, the remnants of the old bourgeois elements were "deprived of rights" (*lishentsi*). They were prohibited from obtaining employment and, in addition, were excluded from any support by the State in respect of food. The doors of the Soviet schools were closed to their children. Breaking with its firmest traditions, the Soviet Government now allowed the children of the *lishentsi* to attend the public schools, and justified the measure by the statement that there remained no more than 1·5 per cent of these former pariahs in the U.S.S.R. In May 1936 it even went so far as to forbid that these people be refused employment on the pretext of their having merely belonged, either personally or through their parents, to the bourgeoisie.

As we have already pointed out, the Second Five-Year Plan (January 1, 1933–December 31, 1937) published by the *Politbureau*, was drawn on a far less fantastic scale than was the First (October 1, 1928–December 31, 1932). It is certain that in the drafting and carrying out of the Second Five-Year Plan many proposals were eliminated that would have threatened the initial schemes for industrialization with catastrophe. Stress was laid upon the fact that the new Plan was to give due consideration to the human being —to what Stalin called the *cadres*.

But can it be said that these changes, considered as a whole, constituted a real reversal of the old policy, that is to say, a renunciation of the fundamental principles of the First Five-Year Plan?

In answering a question of such importance, it may be as imprudent—if not more so—to over-estimate the changes in question as to under-estimate them. It is therefore with great caution that we must approach the problem of the new *kolkhoze* regulations and the new industrial plans.

Faithfulness of the Soviets to the Policy of Collectivist Agriculture

The admission of "plots for private use," no doubt, represented a certain concession on the part of the Soviet Government to individualistic economic effort; but it was in no way equivalent to a recognition of the right of private ownership. The right of the *kolkhozian* peasant over this plot was distinguished from ownership, and even from possession of the soil, by the fact that this was strictly subordinated to his belonging to a given *kolkhoze*. If, for any reason, the peasant left this *kolkhoze*, he lost *ipso facto* the right to use his "private plot." On the other hand, the establishment of these tiny exploitations did not at all mean that the Soviet Government had renounced its policy of totally suppressing the former individualistic forms of peasant farming. On the contrary, the Government projected, for the beginning of 1938, the definite liquidation of the "non-collectivized" peasant farmers (*edinolichniki*). Judging by the rate at which they have been eradicated during the last few years, it seems fairly clear that they must have nearly disappeared within the allotted time. The constant decrease in the number of non-collectivized farms will be seen from the following table:

Years	*Number of Kolkhoze Households*	*Per cent of Collectivization*	*Non-collectivized Households*
October 1, 1934	15,867,700	73·0	5,868,900
July 1, 1935	17,307,800	82·8	3,595,300
April 1, 1936	18,322,200	89·0	2,264,540
April 1, 1937	18,535,500	93·0	1,395,100[1]

The total number of collectivized farms (*kolkozes* and *sovkhozes* combined) in 1937 embraced 93 per cent of the total number of peasant households, and 99·1 per cent of the total land under sown crops.[2] In the same year the *kolkhozes* alone numbered 243,700.

Thus collectivism remains the basis of Soviet agricultural policy, and the admission and even encouragement of small individualistic farming on "private plots" is no more than a temporary exception to the immovable general rule.

1 *Socialist Agriculture* for June 1, 1936. *Economic Problems*, 1937, No. 2, p. 98. The figures relating to the progress of sovietic collectivization prior to 1934 are cited in the chapter "The March towards Socialism," p. 285.
2 *Pravda*, October 19, 1937.

The Burden of New Industrial Plans

So far as industry is concerned, the Second Five-Year Plan unquestionably aimed at less grandiose figures of production than the First Plan. Nevertheless, the industrialization schemes remained under the new Plan a very heavy burden, all the more so as the country was already greatly exhausted by previous efforts. They continued to demand every year enormous sums which had to be drawn upon the general resources of the national Budget. The following table shows the amount of capital investments made at prices varying according to the different periods:[1]

1924–1928	11,100 million roubles
First Five-Year Plan, 1929–1932	52,100 ,,
Four years of the Second Five-Year Plan, 1933 to end of 1936 ..	117,100
Total for 1924–1936	180,300

Incessant Growth of Budget Expenditure

Striking evidence of the burden which the economic plans of the Soviet Government have imposed on the people is to be found in the composition and increase of the U.S.S.R. Budgets.

The total annual Budget of the U.S.S.R. has increased as follows (in millions of roubles) during the last ten years:

1927–1928	6·800	1933	35·000
1928–1929	8·100	1934	49·700
1930	12·800	1935	65·900
1931	20·400	1936	78·700
1932	27·500	1937	98·100[2]

The principal details of revenue and expenditure estimates taken from the last three Budgets of the Soviet Union (in millions of roubles) are shown on the following two pages.

The huge expansion of the Budget was partly due to the fact that it is computed in constantly depreciating roubles. Thus, for instance, the increase in foodstuff prices accounts for a jump in the Budget from 49,700 million of roubles in 1934 to 65,900 millions in 1935.

1 *Twenty Years of Soviet Power,* Statistical Booklet, Party Edition, 1937, p. 12.

2 This last figure is taken from *Pravda* of January 14, 1937. For the years 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1936 the aggregate revenue exceeded the expenditure by 9·800 million roubles. (*Monthly Review of Soviet Delegation,* London, September 1937.)

REVENUE

	1935	1936	1937
A. Revenue from socialized national economy:			
1. Turnover tax[1]	52,025·7	62,690·0	76,795·4
2. Deductions from industrial profits ..	1,725·7	3,188·3	6,304·2
3. Income tax and other taxes on enterprises and organizations	699·2	798·5	972·9
4. Revenue from social insurance ..	1,758·4	3,150·0	3,700·0
5. Interest on surplus funds of production, distribution, and credit organizations invested in State loans ..	865·0	1,200·0	1,600·0
6. Other revenue from socialized economy	16·3	92·0	—
Total revenue from socialized national economy	57,090·3	71,118·8	89,372·5
B. Mobilization of resources of the population:			
1. Placing of State loans	3,550·0	3,950·0	4,375·0
2. Various taxes (agricultural, collections for housing, etc.) ..	2,182·8	2,130·1	2,645.0
Totals from the mobilization of resources of the population	5,732·8	6,080·1	7,020·0
C. Other revenue:			
1. Customs ..	300·0	820·0	860·0
2. Currency system	25·0	20·0	15·0
3. Sundries	452·5	676·1	802·0
	777·5	1,516·1	1,677·0
Grand Total of Revenues (A, B, C)	63,600·6	78,715·0[2]	98,069·5

1 The increase in yield from the turnover tax was due to the heavy industry, and especially to the light industries and food industry, as is shown by the following figures (in millions of roubles):

Yield from Turnover Tax levied on:

	1935	1937
Heavy industries	4,600	8,860
Light industries	2,495	11,382
Food industry ..	7,549	20,387
Totals ..	14,644	40,629

The increase in the yield from this tax must be attributed chiefly to the rise in prices after the suppression, in 1935, of "normalized prices," which were in operation under the supply-card system (see p. 361).

2 Budget revenue for 1936 showed a surplus of 5·9 per cent over the estimates. Official explanations attributed this, in the first place, to the over-fulfilment of the estimates of industrial production and to slight increase in prices of heavy industries products on the one hand, and in railway and waterway freight tariffs on the other. (Report of the People's Commissar for Finance, *Pravda*, January 12, 1937.)

EXPENDITURE[1]

	1935	1936	1937
A. Financing of national economy:			
1. Industry	15,324·6	14,076·1	12,397·5
2. Agriculture	7,122·0	7,700·7	9,059·2
3. Transport and communications	6,026·1	7,907·5	8,533·0
4. Commerce and various	6,684·2	7,899·2	9,595·9
Totals for A	35,156·9	37,583·5	39,585·6
B. Social and cultural services (Education, Health, etc.)	4,804·3	6,509·5	10,870·1
C. National defence and administration:			
1. People's Commissariat for National Defence[2]	6,500·0	14,815·5	20,102·2
2. People's Commissariat for the Interior	1,652·5	2,110·9	2,699·4
3. Other administrations (Justice, etc.) ..	886·2	970·9	1,767·9
Totals for C	9,038·7	17,897·3	24,569·5
D. Loan service	1,815·0	2,701·5	2,579·0
E. Allocations paid to Budgets of Union Republics and local bodies[3]	8,977·3	12,456·5	15,933·5
F. Sundry expenditure	3,308·4	1,566·7	3,581·8
Grand Total of Expenditure (A, B, C, D, E, F)	63,100·6[4]	78,715·0	97,119·5
Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure	500·0	—	950·0

1 Budget estimates for the latter years show a relative decrease of capital investments made in the national economy, and a relative increase in expenditure for the satisfaction of the people's immediate needs.

2 The expenditure under the heading of national defence has increased enormously in comparison with the 1933 Budget, when it was only 1,420,000,000 roubles. This, in the first place, was due to the increase in the effectives and armaments of the Red Army, and the creation of a new People's Commissariat for Industries working for National Defence. In a certain measure, however, it is also due to the abolition of the reduced prices applied to the upkeep of the army and its technical equipment before the introduction, in 1935, of "uniform prices" for the whole of the national economy (see below, p. 361).

3 The sums allocated to the Budgets of Union Republics and local bodies are designed to meet the cost of social and cultural services charged to those Budgets. For this purpose 13,895,000,000 roubles were paid out in 1935; 14,782,000,000 in 1936, and 15,734,000,000 in 1937; in addition to the sums inscribed for this same purpose in the Budget of the Union itself.

4 In addition to the items set forth above, a sum of 2,300,000,000 roubles was added both to the revenue and the expenditure sides of the 1935 Budget, representing the increase accrued in the estimated value of the stocks of raw materials. This explains why the total of the 1935 Budget amounted to 65,900,000,000 roubles.

Moreover, the collectivization of agriculture and the submission of artisans to compulsory co-operative organization extended State control over new branches of national economic activity, and led to incorporation in the national Budget of accounts which previously remained outside such control. This was another cause for the inflation of the Budget. In 1928 the State managed 44 per cent of the total national revenue; in 1929—56 per cent; in 1930—74·3 per cent; and in 1931—the year of the complete triumph of collectivization—90 per cent.[1]

Yet, if the Soviet Government was able to expand its Budget to such colossal proportions, this was chiefly due to the fact that it did not hesitate to impose on the people a burden of taxation unprecedented in history. The sovietic State possesses absolute power over everything indispensable for the material needs of its citizens. It sells clothing and linen, soap and spirits (vodka), bread and tobacco, books and groceries, sugar and tea, matches and petroleum, tinned food and sweets. On all these commodities a special tax—called the turnover tax—is imposed at each of the successive stages traversed by the product: from the requisition of the raw materials raised by the peasants to the delivery of the finished article to the consumer.

Growth of Indirect Taxation

This indirect tax on consumption, which in its nature is related to the old excise duties, increases the price of commodities to an extent out of all proportion. It constitutes the main item on the revenue side of the "Socialist Budget," in flagrant violation of the old Socialist principle which rejects taxation of articles of prime necessity. Since 1932 the turnover tax has furnished the State with a larger return than all other sources of revenue taken together:

Years	*Million Roubles*	*Per cent of Budget*
1931	11,643·3	50
1932	19,514·0	63
1933	26,983·0	64
1934	37,615·0	75
1935	51,900·0	79

The percentage of total Budget revenue yielded by the turnover tax rose from 50 per cent in 1931 to 79 per cent in 1935. In that

1 *U.S.S.R. Handbook*, 1936, p. 146. This percentage is claimed to have reached 99·1 in 1936. (*Twenty Years of Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1937, p. 5.)

year its yield reached 52,000 million roubles. (It must not be forgotten, however, that the value of the rouble varied in the interval.) In the tax on turnover the Soviet Government has, in fact, discovered a veritable gold mine, which has enabled it to lavish tremendous sums on colossal new factories, on aviation, on scientific institutes, on the Moscow underground railway, whose luxurious installation is offered for the admiration of foreign tourists and of Cabinet Ministers from the "capitalist" countries visiting the U.S.S.R.

Turnover Tax in 1936 and 1937 Budgets

In 1936 and 1937 the turnover tax was levied on grain, alcohol, vegetables, oil, sugar, meat, cotton tissues, petroleum, motor spirit, etc. According to Budget estimates this impost was expected in 1936 to yield 62,690 million roubles (79 per cent of the whole Budget), and 76,795 million roubles (78 per cent of the whole Budget) in 1937. The weight of this enormous fiscal burden becomes evident when we compare its yield with the total volume of the retail trade of the country. For 1936 this volume was estimated at 100,000 million roubles; according to the initial information on the realization of the Plan it actually attained 106,000 millions. For 1937 the retail trade was expected to reach 131,000 millions. Thus, in 1936, the State deducted in the form of turnover tax 60 kopecks for each rouble received in retail trade. In 1937 this deduction represents over 58 kopecks in each rouble spent by the consumer. If any system of indirect taxation weighing so heavily on the prime necessaries of life were introduced in any modern democratic country, would it not arouse a legitimate feeling of revolt, especially among those circles which are the most inclined to regard the Soviet régime as the image of the Socialist paradise?

Indirect Taxation in the Rural Areas

As already stated, the deliveries in kind or *zagotovki* imposed on the peasants are the most important source of the turnover tax. Since 1932 this tax has been imposed on the rural areas in the following way. Every *kolkhoze* and non-collectivized farm (as far as the latter still exist) are periodically notified that they must deliver to the State, at certain fixed prices, specified quantities of wheat, potatoes, meat, milk or butter, and wool. The amount of these compulsory deliveries depends: firstly, on the locality in which the

kolkhoze or the farm is situated, the rich regions in the south being more largely drawn on than the poorer northern country; and, secondly, in proportion to its acreage, its crop-bearing surface, its quantity of live stock, etc. On the other hand, the compulsory delivery made is never based on the actual yield obtained. The latter may, therefore, in the years of bad harvest, fall short of these compulsory deliveries, with the result that the farmers are doomed to starvation. This calamity has occurred more than once in the painful history of the Russian collectivized peasantry, but the Soviet Government has never admitted the truth until years later.

An example can be found in the spring of 1937. Officially the 1936 harvest had at first been declared excellent. Towards March 1937, however, it became clear that "unfavourable weather conditions had caused a diminution of the crops in the Volga region and in the south-east."[1] It was subsequently found that the actual situation was much more alarming than had been stated. In the Volga region, in the south, in the south-east, in Central Russia, and in Western Siberia, very numerous *kolkhozes* had not been able to proceed with spring sowing through lack of seeds, and the Government had been compelled to come to their assistance by lending them some.[2]

The very circumstance that seed loans had to be granted, in the spring of 1936, to most of the regions which normally yield the best crops, leads in itself to gloomy deductions. But it is, perhaps, still more disquieting that the *kolkhozes* were lacking in seed reserves, whereas, according to Article 11 of the *kolkhoze* statutes, the reserve of seed for the next season's sowings must be set apart from each crop immediately after collection of compulsory State deliveries. Under these conditions the fact that there was not sufficient grain for sowing obviously shows that the entire harvest had gone to the State, and that the *kolkhozes* were not in a position to retain sufficient food for their members (in the form of "labour-days" paid in kind), nor for their live stock.[3]

During the period 1928–1935 the compulsory deliveries of grain

1 *For Industrialisation*, March 30, 1937.

2 *Pravda*, April 3, 1937; *Izvestia*, April 16, 1937; *Socialist Agriculture*, April 17, 1937.

3 The high officials of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture have themselves been obliged to admit that in many parts of the U.S.S.R. stock-breeding was seriously jeopardized by the lack of fodder in the winter of 1936–1937. (See *Socialist Agriculture*, March 1, 1937.) The necessity of using straw and twigs for feeding live stock is another proof of the peasants' lack of foodstuffs.

to the State were on the following ascending curve (in quintals of 100 kilograms):[1]

Years	*Total Yields of Cereals Million Quintals*	*Compulsory Deliveries to the State Million Quintals*	*Percentages of the Total Crops*
1928	733·2	124	16·9
1929	717·4	163	22·7
1930	835·4	226	27·0
1931	694·8	227	32·7
1932	698·7	192	27·5
1933	800·0	231	28·9
1934	845·0	263	31·1
1935	920·1	—	—

In addition, the peasants are compelled to deliver to the State all their cotton and sugar-beet; all potatoes, up to 22 quintals per hectare[2]; all wool, up to 2·000 grammes (4·4 lb.) per sheep; all milk, up to 220 litres (or about 48 gallons) per cow in the northern provinces, etc.

These deliveries are made against payment of "fixed prices" by the State, which somewhat camouflages their real fiscal character. The latter is, however, made clear when the extremely low prices paid by the State for agricultural deliveries are compared with the inordinately high prices charged by the State when selling these same products to the consumer. The differences thus obtained figure among the assets of the Budget under the heading "Turnover Tax received from Agricultural Produce." The estimated yield under this heading amounted to a round sum of 24,000 million roubles for each of the three years 1935, 1936, and 1937.

The revenue returns for 1935, recently published, indicate what enormous proportion of the value of the agricultural production is appropriated by the State; and also how little is left to the peasants.[3]

1 *The Plan*, 1935, No. 13.

2 One hectare is 2·47 acres.

3 The juxtaposition of certain figures published in various Soviet journals enables a striking comparison to be drawn between pre-war prices of cereals in Russia, the present prices paid by the State for wheat collected by it under compulsory deliveries, and the retail prices at which the State sells flour.

In 1913 a quintal of 100 kg. (or about 2 cwt.) of rye cost 4 roubles 47 kopecks, and the same quintal of wheat 5 r. 68 kop. (*Economic Review*, 1928, No. 5.) In 1933–1934 compulsory deliveries of the 1933 crop were paid for by the Government at 6 r. 33 kop. per quintal of rye, and at 8 r. 53 kop. per quintal of wheat. The latter prices are much lower than those of 1913 owing to the reduced purchasing power of the rouble. (*Compulsory Delivery, Prices and Qualitative Estimate of Cereals and Sunflower Seeds for the 1933–1934 Campaign*, published by Iampolski, 1933.)

On the other hand, the wholesale price of rye flour in 1934 was 60 roubles per 100 kg. (2 cwt.). Retail prices varied according to the region, on January 1,

The total operations of the Committee for Compulsory Deliveries in 1935 represented 25,030 million roubles, of which 20,729·4 millions, or 82·8 per cent of the total value of the agricultural products, were levied in the form of turnover tax.[1]

This sum is far, however, from representing the total revenue which the State draws from agriculture in the form of turnover tax. A certain proportion of agricultural produce goes to industry, and is, therefore, after undergoing industrial treatment, subjected a second time to turnover tax. In 1937 this tax, in its different applications, represented 80 per cent of the total Budget revenue. Analysis, nevertheless, reveals that for three-quarters of its yield this impost is derived, in one way or another, from agricultural production and is borne by the *kolkhozes*.[2]

Turnover Tax and Industrial Output

The yield of turnover tax from industrial production and commercial operations in 1937 is returned as 52,700 million roubles. The fraction of this tax which falls on the means of production required for industrial equipment has a purely accountancy value and represents a trifling proportion of the entire yield. On the other hand, the yield is proportionally much larger from the levy of the tax on light industry commodities and the products of the food industry, as well as from some of the products of heavy industry sold in retail trade, such as petroleum and motor spirit. From the food industry alone the tax produced 26,800 million roubles.[3] The Commissariat for this industry is in charge of transforming into food products (such as canned goods, sausages, etc.) the raw materials

1935, from 1 r. 35 kop. to 3 r. 50 kop. per kilogram. The wholesale price of wheat flour (60 per cent grinding) in 1934 was 66 r. 70 kop. per 100 kg. The retail price varied according to district, on January 1, 1935, from 1 r. 40 kop. to 3 r. 80 kop. per kilogram. (*Bulletin of Financial and Economic Legislation*, 1934, No. 19.)

It is to be noted, however, that after the price reforms in the autumn of 1935 (see p. 361) the price paid for compulsory deliveries was increased by 10 per cent, which was very inadequate in the circumstances.

1 *Report on the Execution of the U.S.S.R. Budget for 1935*, p. 159. The very low prices paid to peasants by the State for "deliveries in kind" during 1935 will be found on pp. 359–362.

2 About 85 per cent of the total agricultural products drawn from the villages consists of compulsory deliveries, and only 15 per cent are sold by the peasants in the markets at competitive prices. The Second Five-Year Plan confirms this estimate by the figures which it fixes for 1937.

3 This figure includes 6,200 million roubles drawn by the State solely from the sale of spirits, mainly vodka.

whether received from the population in the form of deliveries in kind or produced directly by State enterprises (*sovkhozes*, fisheries, etc.). The high tax levied in this manner on foodstuffs must be added to the 24,100 million roubles of turnover tax exacted from the peasants. Thus, 50,900 million roubles—or more than one half of the total State revenue for 1937—was, in fact, raised from indirect taxation on foodstuffs.

As for the turnover tax levied through the Commissariat for Light Industries it figures in the 1937 Budget for 11,400 million roubles; the whole burden of which falls, of course, entirely on the shoulders of the consumers.

The above clearly explains and demonstrates the relation of cause and effect between gigantic capital expenditure on intensified industrialization and the low standard of living in the U.S.S.R., under the unprecedented burden of the Soviet Budget.

Other Taxes and Forced Loans

Compared with the revenue from universal indirect taxation, the yield from other sources is of secondary importance. These other sources consist of various smaller taxes and obligatory subscriptions to State loans.

The yield from secondary taxes was fixed, in the 1937 Budget Estimates, at only 2,600 million roubles, of which agriculture was expected to furnish 1,200 millions from an agricultural tax in cash[1] and from a single tax to meet cultural needs. State loans were estimated to bring in 4,400 millions. The obligatory character of these loans is not recognized, but is none the less real. Whenever a loan is announced—and this happens at least once a year—a quota is established for each of the republics in the federation, and for each province, and subsequently for each district. Then a campaign is started for actually securing the subscription of these quotas. The trade union officials fix the percentage of the wages which various categories of workers and employees are invited to contribute. Their subscription is generally the equivalent of a month's or a fortnight's pay and is payable by instalments spread over the following twelve months. These contributions are deducted from the

1 In 1936 the cash tax on agriculture was transformed into a cash income tax in the form of a 3 per cent deduction from the gross income of each collective farm.

wages simultaneously with the social insurance payments, etc.[1] The compulsory character of these loans is aggravated by the fact that it is impossible to sell the securities subscribed for, except with the consent of the "Special Commission for Supporting Credit of the State," which permission is very seldom granted.[2]

Revenue from Issues of Currency

Lastly, the issues of paper currency are utilized as an additional source of cash for the needs of industrialization. During the first years of the latter they played a very important part in this connection. Since then, the Soviet leaders have refrained from the abuse of the printing press in order not to fall again into the abyss of inflation as in 1918–1924.

The profits from this source of revenue may be estimated as shown by the table on the opposite page, which indicates the amount of paper money in circulation, as well as the gold cover (in millions of chervonetz roubles):[3]

1 The internal debt of the U.S.S.R. amounted on January 1, 1934, to 14,370 million roubles. (*U.S.S.R. Handbook*, London, 1936, p. 323.) According to the Budget figures, it increased, at the end of 1937, by more than 15,000 millions, to which must be added 4,000 million roubles from the floating of the 1937 Special National Defence Loan. At the end of that year the internal debt therefore exceeded 30,000 million roubles. The effort imposed on the country will be seen from the fact that in 1934 the wages fund amounted to 41,600 million roubles, and in 1937 to 50,700 millions. (Ibid., p. 153.) As regards the degree of pressure applied to secure subscriptions, it is made clear by the number of holders, who amount to 40 millions in a total population of 170 millions. (Ibid., p. 322.)

2 Until recently, it was also forbidden to pledge these obligations without special permission. Since 1937 loan securities can be pledged freely for a period not exceeding six months, the amount of the loan being limited to 30 per cent of the value pledged.

3 These figures are given by the *Monthly Review* issued by the U.S.S.R. Trade Delegation, London, 1932–1935, and by the League of Nations *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* for 1932–1935. For 1937 they can be found in the *Monthly Review*, 1937, No. 6, pp. 280 and 299.

The average annual figures for the monetary circulation in the U.S.S.R. naturally differ slightly from those given in the table on p. 339, which refer to definite dates. This difference is also due, in part, to the deficiencies of Soviet statistics, which nearly always reveal certain discrepancies between different sources by publishing different figures for the same subjects. The following data are available as to the average annual circulation covering both paper money and subsidiary silver and copper coins:

Years	*Millions of Roubles*	*Years*	*Millions of Roubles*
1928	1,733·7	1932	6,638·0
1929	2,313·6	1933	7,228·0
1930	3,538·6	1934	7,255·0
1931	4,821·0	1935	8,633·0

(The figures for 1928–1934 have been taken from the pamphlet issued by the

	Paper Money Circulation (Banknotes and Treasury Certificates)	*Silver and Copper Coins*	*Gold Cover*[1]
January 1, 1929	1,821·1	206·8	179
January 1, 1930	2,529·2	243·8	256
January 1, 1931	4,026·7	275·3	484
January 1, 1932	5,153·1	311·4	638
July 1, 1932	5,847·0	332·0	715[2]
July 1, 1933	6,533·0	292·0	779
January 1, 1934	6,501·5	368·0	808
April 1, 1935	7,478·9	400·4	858
October 1, 1935	—	—	971
January 1, 1937	10,820·7[3]	434·9	1,906

Thus, both the paper currency and the gold cover have unceasingly increased. As to the upward bound of the gold cover from 971 to 1,906 millions at January 1, 1937, which would at first glance appear surprising, it was principally due to the effect of the devaluation of February 1936.[4] On January 1, 1937, the gold cover was equivalent to less than 17 per cent of the monetary circulation (paper and subsidiary coins).

Problem of Making Soviet Industry Pay

If the Soviet Budget imposes the heaviest sacrifices on the population of the U.S.S.R. in the name of creating a socialized industry, in the latter, nevertheless, everything is far from being satisfactory. The sovietic industries—especially the heavy industries, on which prodigal care was bestowed under both Five-Year Plans—show

Soviet State Bank at the time of the VIIth Congress of the Soviets, Moscow, 1935. Those for 1935 were quoted by Grinko, People's Commissar for Finance, in *Pravda*, January 17, 1936.)

Whatever discrepancies there may be between these figures and those of the table in the text, the conclusions to be drawn from them are no less identical.

1 Prior to 1929 the gold reserve amounted, according to official data, to 96,000,000 roubles on April 1, 1924; to 142,000,000 on January 1, 1925; to 182,000,000 on January 1, 1926; to 164,000,000 on January 1, 1927; and to 189,000,000 on January 1, 1928. Thus, the movement of the gold reserve can be divided into two periods. During the first, which ended in 1929, the gold reserve rose at first and then was stabilized at around 150–200 million gold roubles. The second period, which coincided with that of intensive industralization, was characterized by a rapid increase in the gold cover. (*Bulletin*, No. 6, of the Birmingham Bureau of Research on Russian Economic Conditions.)

2 September 1st.

3 On January 1, 1937, the circulation of notes amounted to 8,020,300,000 roubles and that of Treasury certificates to 2,800,400,000 roubles.

4 See footnote No. 2 on page 367.

more than one unhealthy symptom due to the fact that they were being developed in a hothouse atmosphere, as a State monopoly, which had no competition to face. Incapable of paying their way, and suffering from a chronic deficit, they were nevertheless kept going, and every year registered an increase in output. Until 1936 wholesale prices in most branches of heavy industry were fixed below cost prices. These wholesale prices[1] were established in accordance with the general economic objects pursued by the Government in its economic policy as a whole (a method called in the U.S.S.R. *khozraschet*), and consequently without following in any respect the methods practised in classic economy. The deficits experienced by the industries were always met by State subsidies.[2]

It is true that in the first years of the *N.E.P.*, the history of sovietic industry knew a period when the higher economic boards of the U.S.S.R. set themselves the task of creating an industry which would as far as possible return a profit, or at least not work at a loss. It had been laid down in 1923, in a resolution passed by the XIIth Congress of the Pan-Russian Communist Party (April 17th to 25th), that a rational organization of Soviet economy was not realizable so long as no regular economic estimates existed, or any real costings, or any commercial balance sheet. This resolution ran as follows: "Only an industry which produces more than it absorbs can be successful. An industry maintained at the expense of the Budget cannot create a solid and durable base for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The problem of surplus-value to be obtained from State

1 In this paragraph it is a question not of retail prices applied for the sale of commodities to the population, but of the wholesale prices invoiced by State enterprises at the time of delivering their products to other State enterprises or organizations. In this instance it is obviously not possible to speak of selling prices, because the articles delivered still belong to the same owner, namely, the State. These wholesale prices merely serve as bases for clearing operations between the different industrial and commercial enterprises of the State.

2 The periodical *Planned Economy* (1936, No. 5, pp. 76–77) has justified in the following way the practice of such subsidies: "During the First Five-Year Plan, the success of industrialization necessitated the maintenance of low prices for the products of the different branches of heavy industry. Cheap metals and coal were the prime condition of obtaining cheap machinery and thus fostering the penetration of mechanical equipment into all the economic fields. The only way of maintaining low prices for the products of heavy industries, considering their high cost price, was by subsidies. The suppression of these in the first years of the Second Five-Year Plan, when the country had not yet sufficiently mastered technique and cost prices were high, would have led to a sudden rise in the prices of heavy industry products."

industries is a vital problem for the destinies of the proletariat."[1] Starting from this resolution, the economic organs endeavoured, for a time, to work out cost prices in accordance with pre-war methods. The consequence was, that wholesale prices were based partly on pre-war costs, after making allowance for the new conditions, and partly on those prevailing in the market during the *N.E.P.* period. However, less than a year after the adoption of the resolution referred to, the XIIIth Conference of the Party (January 16–18, 1924) was compelled to admit that this effort to harmonize wholesale industrial prices with the cost of production, and at the same time to include in them as large a profit as possible, had led to so great an advance in prices that numerous State enterprises had been placed before "the menace of having to suspend payments and reduce output." In these circumstances the Party declared that all necessary attention should be given to finding a way to "lowering wholesale prices."

Despite this resolution, the tendency to base such prices on usual commercial calculation of costings continued to be felt for some time. After 1924, however, Government intervention played an ever-increasing part in determining the price level. The close of 1927 was a decisive turn in the history of wholesale industrial prices. The XVth Congress of the Party, which took place between December 2 and 19, 1927, decided that "their compression" was "the central problem of industry, and that all other questions must be subordinated to it."

In 1928–1929 the wholesale industrial prices displayed a more and more marked disparity with those prevailing in the open markets. By 1930 this process was completed. The "commercial calculation" within the limits of each enterprise was definitely superseded by a computation based on the general economic objects of the collectivity (the *khozraschet*) and the difference between the wholesale price, arrived at by the latter method, and the net cost were regularly covered by allocations from the State Budget.

The consequences of this system were not long in manifesting themselves. In July 1931 Stalin reported to a conference of directors

1 Prior to this, during a period which can only be described as Utopian, the question of prices was simply brushed aside as being of no consequence. In August 1918, the Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution in which it declared that Soviet Russia would henceforth practise exclusively direct barter and that the "settlement for products delivered and products received in this way would be recorded in the books, without the use of money."

of industry that many industrial enterprises were leading a parasitical existence, and that in some instances "subsidies have brought about a Budget-eating mentality" and "weakened the interest taken by the enterprises in the financial results of their management." The Soviet leaders were subsequently driven to realize that the fixing of wholesale prices below the level of cost prices, and the system of making up the difference from State subsidies, had not only been harmful to certain individual enterprises, but also to industry as a whole. The "Budget-eating" tendency, the "neglect in financial management," the "slackening of economical vigilance," the growing "failure to show a return on all work carried out,"[1] were becoming generalized. Finally, the Government was obliged to abandon the system of Budget subsidies and also the practice of wholesale prices devised by the central economic boards.

In April 1936 many Soviet newspapers published articles "on the suppression of State subsidies, and on wholesale prices in the heavy and the timber industries."[2] Henceforth the new wholesale prices were to be established in such a way that a given branch of industry as a whole (and not only a given undertaking) should show no deficit. These new prices were "to be based on the average cost price obtaining in each branch for a given product. The price thus constitutes, on one hand, a premium intended to encourage the trusts (i.e. a group of State undertakings) working at lower costings, and, on the other hand, a powerful stimulus to those producing at higher cost prices."[3]

The new policy of wholesale prices is fated to encounter serious difficulties. In Soviet industry the cost price of one and the same commodity—for example, pig iron, superphosphates, etc.—varies from workshop to workshop, by differences often equivalent to as much as 200 per cent. The fixing of an "average cost price" will lead to the State being obliged to support inefficient enterprises at the expense of the others. Instead of being closed down, as would be the case under the capitalist régime, the "bad business concerns" will constantly tend to increase the "average cost price" above the normal level of rational production. The principle of "commercial

1 *Planned Economy*, 1936, No. 5, pp. 76 and 77; *The Plan*, No. 9, 1936, p. 8.

2 State subsidies were suppressed in the coal, peat, iron-ore, metal, cement, and timber industries, and in many branches of the chemical industry, as well as in certain domains of mechanical engineering.

3 *Planned Economy*, 1936, No. 5, p. 82.

calculation," once more proclaimed by the authorities, will thereby be seriously affected.[1]

Is it possible, however, to speak of any "commercial calculation" in a monopolized State economy where the prices of the raw materials subjected to industrial treatment are not determined by the state of the market, but are arbitrarily fixed by the Government? When an enterprise receives its raw materials, its fuel, its semi-finished goods at fictitiously low prices, the profit alleged by it can obviously be only illusory. The newspaper, *For Industrialisation* (No. 196, for 1935) was obliged to admit that "in view of the disparity between the wholesale prices applied to raw materials and fuel, as well as of the diversity of the modes of calculation in different plants, the book entries do not reflect the costs of production as they are actually borne by the national economy." It must be concluded that, under such conditions, any effort towards making industry pay its way would be to a great extent futile.[2] The results of the official inspection of the Makeiev metallurgical works at Gorki (Nizhni-Novgorod), in May 1937, were very typical. This undertaking had been considered since 1935 as a model one. On August 11, 1935, *Pravda* stated that "this plant, with its 25,000 workers, is a magnet which is attracting the attention of the whole country. The Makeiev concern is the flag-bearer in the struggle for making Soviet metallurgy pay its way." An engineer, Gvakharia, had been appointed to take charge of the plant by Stalin himself, and his

1 Prior to the credit reform of 1930, bills of exchange circulated within the socialized sector of industry, and State enterprises (including the co-operatives) were allowed to grant reciprocal short-term credits against bills of exchange. This direct emission of bills by the enterprises themselves hampered the planned distribution of credits. In order to oblige the enterprises to comply exactly with the latter, and deprive them of all opportunity for manœuvring with the maturities and obtaining credits from other enterprises, the Government suppressed the circulation of bills, and strictly limited credits to the different enterprises by the amount of the accounts opened to them at the State Bank. The latter has thus become the only source of short-term credits for the whole of the socialized industry. This is another example of the unavoidable centralization under the Bolshevik system.

2 The principal economic publications of the Soviet Union have been obliged to admit that in 1936 the "industry has not carried out the plan of bringing down cost prices, and that the proportion of goods of inferior quality (waste goods, second and third categories) has considerably exceeded the standard limit. . . . The inspection carried out in the second half of 1936, in a number of enterprises and economic boards, has revealed a lack of accountancy, serious breaches of financial discipline, and flagrant pillaging of State funds. The year 1936 marked a further disparity between the rate of production and the ability of the management." (*Economic Life*, February 6, 1937.)

administrative initiative always enjoyed the dictator's personal support. His reports invariably disclosed large profits. Everything went well until early in June 1937. Gvakharia was suddenly denounced by the newspaper *For Industrialisation* as a Trotzkyist and a wrecker, and his brilliant book-keeping exposed as completely falsified.

It would be difficult to deny that the misadventure which happened in the model metallurgical plant was characteristic of the whole of the Soviet industry. Be that as it may, the industries of the U.S.S.R., taken as a whole, certainly continue until now to lead a purely parasitical existence, and it is always the peasant who in the first place foots the bill.

The Quality of Soviet Industrial Production

The need for improving the quality of industrial production has raised another problem for which the Government has constantly, but vainly, sought a solution. It is true that, according to official statistics, the yield from labour, in the first six months of 1936, exceeded by 21 per cent the average 1935 level; but it is still considerably below that of the more advanced countries. "In the United States of America, the productivity of labour is twice as high as in our own country," asserted the Soviet journal for heavy industry.[1] Despite the constant improvement of production on the purely technical side, it is also admitted that, for the whole of Soviet industry, the task for the coming year is "to reach the technical level of world industry."[2] Soviet industry will, however, have to

1 *For Industrialisation*, July 5, 1936. In its issue of February 1, 1937, the same journal observed that the average output per worker in the U.S.S.R. was not only behind the *stakhanovist* standard and indices, but also in the rear of the average indices of the technically advanced capitalist countries. . . . In the blast furnaces of the United States the average annual output per worker was 1,735 tons in 1929 while in the U.S.S.R. it was only 575 tons in 1936. "In the best plants of the United States it has reached 3,780 tons, as against 1,500–1,600 tons with us. . . . In 1929 in an American mechanical blast furnace, 75 to 85 workers were employed, while with us 200 to 240 are needed," etc.

2 *Planned Economy*, 1936, No. 7, p. 15. Similarly *Pravda*, March 2, 1937, conceded that, in 1936, U.S.S.R. heavy industry still had an output considerably below that of the capitalist countries. It declared: "What is it that prevents us from catching up with the advanced enterprises of the capitalist countries as regards the productivity of labour? It is, above all, the backward organization of the effort, the too great quantity and the bad utilization of the labour employed in many of the undertakings. . . . In certain branches of industry it is because the workers are not skilled enough, and that they are employed in excessive quan-

tend every effort to equal in quality the production of the more advanced countries. At the meeting of the Council attached to the People's Commissariat for Heavy Industry, held at the end of June 1936, People's Commissar Ordzhonikidze and his deputy Piatakov had to recognize that "the quality of our machines leaves much to be desired. The problem of quality has become the cornerstone of our further development."[1] *For Industrialisation* notes with bitterness that "the Soviet Union has invested a hundred million roubles in the construction of the Nikopol tube plant according to the most up-to-date technical requirements, and it is supplying the country with rubbish instead of tubes."[2] "In 1936 we did not carry out the minimum programme," declared the People's Commissar for Light Industry. "The high percentage of waste and the low quality of our goods are a veritable shame. Most of the waste is due to uncleanliness, lack of intelligence, and failure to take proper care. It is an unqualified muddle! It is a shame!"[3] For the year 1937, also, frequent complaints of this kind are to be found in the Soviet Press, often under the signature of Commissars and other high officials.[4]

Thus it is clear that the Soviet Government has modified its tendencies since the out-of-date period of "dizziness from success," but this does not mean that it has as yet definitely chosen the road towards economic realism. This is even yet extremely remote. The cycle of its social experiments is still far from having been accomplished. In such conditions it would be at least imprudent to speak of any decisive evolution of either Soviet doctrine or practices.

In point of fact, there is but Stalin's command "Take care of the working personnel," which constitutes a practical innovation. This care for human beings, however, as Stalin himself comprehends it, has also a reverse side. It is accompanied by proceedings which recall the sacrifices imposed on men for the industrial development of the country under the First Five-Year Plan.

tities. . . . In their administrative machinery, enterprises often have personnel little trained for their work and sometimes even with a too rudimentary education."

1 *For Industrialisation*, May 5, 1936.

2 Ibid., July 15, 1936. Numerous other examples of bad work are cited in No. 8 of the same journal for 1936.

3 *Light Industry*, January 9, 1937.

4 In particular, *Pravda* and *For Industrialisation* for July and August 1937, and for early 1938.

Idea of Equality Abandoned

Practically speaking, this policy of "consideration" for human beings manifested itself first in the abandonment of the equalitarian principle (or the so-called *uravnilovka*). The system of a more or less equal remuneration for all the workers was replaced by a differentiation in wages, which was soon aggravated by the introduction of piecework and, in some cases, of a system of bonuses. In violation of all their earlier professions, Stalin and his associates, in thousands of speeches, proclaimed the principle of economic inequality. It suddenly became morally meritorious as well as proof of good citizenship to earn as much as possible. To begin with, the so-called "shock-workers" (i.e. those more arduous in their work) were awarded decorations and personal privileges. Those workers who had been raised, by their gains, above the common level sought to make their daily lives easier; and by the mouth of Stalin himself this desire was declared not only legitimate, but worthy of the highest praise.

In order that larger earnings should not lie fallow, the State shops were hastily stocked with all kinds of merchandise, of which the population, in the course of the long lean years, had forgotten the usage. All sorts of petty luxury articles—silk stockings and blouses, perfumes, vanity bags, gramophones, etc.—which were usually imported from abroad, marked the advent of this new era of care for the human being. The resurrected man was also given the faculty of occupying a flat of his own, or a cottage in the suburbs, which faculty, however, was more theoretical than real, owing to the shortage of accommodation. Even the promise of a motor car was dangled in front of him, once all official requirements had been satisfied. With the same object of rendering life more attractive, the Soviet authorities devoted themselves to reconstructing the family fireside, which they had previously so actively striven to destroy. "Comrades, life is brighter than it used to be," had become the daily slogan of all the innumerable official stump orators in Russia. They thus unwittingly confirmed how wretched life in the U.S.S.R. had been until recently.

Measures for Intensifying Labour

The possibility of earning more and of somewhat improving one's standard of living naturally afforded the workers a powerful stimulus

towards intensifying their work. At first, a comparatively small increase in individual output, by comparison with the general standard, enabled the industrious toilers to be promoted to the class of shock-workers (or *udarniki*). Soon the number of the latter attained 80 per cent of the total workers. A certain intensification of labour having thus been secured, the standard of production attained by the shock-workers was henceforth imposed on all as a general requirement. "Consideration for the workers," however, did not finish at that point. The authorities attempted to obtain a still greater intensification of labour. It was in these conditions that the famous *stakhanovist* movement was born, now officially glorified throughout the whole of the U.S.S.R. and even beyond its frontiers.

Stakhanovism

The date of its birth was August 30, 1935, when an obscure non-party workman, Alexei Stakhanov by name, established a record by hewing, in the course of one shift, 102 tons of coal, instead of the normal seven. Similar attempts had previously been made in various parts of the Union, but were discouraged by the Communist authorities, who did not care then for any individual to greatly surpass his fellows by the volume of his earnings. But Stakhanov's achievement was taken up and inflated by the Soviet Press, and proclaimed an example worthy of emulation.

At first, imitation was slow; but, from the end of the following October, the movement spread to the whole of Russian industry and even certain branches of agriculture. In the middle of November 1935, on the occasion of a conference held in Moscow, three thousand selected *stakhanovists* were invited to meet Stalin and other Soviet leaders. In December the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Party was devoted almost entirely to the achievements of the new men of the day. January and February 1936 were marked by almost uninterrupted propaganda of *stakhanovist* methods in the form of "six days," and "ten days." The aim was to make whole branches of industry adopt this method of work, claimed to be a new discovery.

What, then, is the *stakhanovist* method? This was made clear in the speeches of the *stakhanovists* at the Moscow November conference. *Stakhanovism* has a twofold aspect: (1) it is a simple division of labour (Stakhanov works in the mine only with a pneumatic drill, and does no timbering or loading); and (2) it is the most elementary

rationalization of a labour process, an attempt to overcome the flood of disorder which extended throughout Soviet industry. (Stakhanov's emulators in the textile industry no longer "run around their looms" but "follow in their work a constant itinerary.") Thus, as a matter of fact, no new discovery has been made in the U.S.S.R. The *stakhanovists* merely began to put into practice what was very well known abroad as well as in Russia before the Revolution. How, then, are the sudden records of Stakhanov and his imitators to be explained?

The Government has an interest that these new heroes should demonstrate the possibility of a particularly high output, and for this reason it surrounds their work with particular care and with special facilities which are not accorded to other workers, and are even often prejudicial to them. It is using the experiments of the *stakhanovists* to try and raise the existing standards of individual output—which are really much too low—in order to increase industrial production while reducing labour-costs per unit produced.

It cannot be denied that the Government secured a certain amount of success in this way. On the whole, the standards of individual output were increased by from 15 per cent to 50 per cent.[1] This was one of the reasons—perhaps only a secondary one—for the general rise in industrial output, which registered an increase of 27½ per cent during the first nine months of 1936.

In any case, the Soviet Government has not succeeded in "transforming the experiment of the vanguard into common patrimony." In every industrial undertaking the different phases of production are closely bound up together. The *stakhanovist* movement which sprang up spontaneously at different points, did not take this interdependence into account. While in one section the *stakhanovist* worker succeeded in raising the output considerably, the other sections proved unable to keep pace with it. The acceleration of output at a given stage often did more harm than good by disturbing the regular progress of the products through the successive stages of

1 Often, however, these new standards are not reached (the average deficiency being from 10 per cent to 15 per cent).

On September 20, 1936, *For Industrialisation* published figures showing that, despite the strength of the *stakhanovist* movement, the average output of the Russian worker remains still comparatively very low. Whilst in Germany the output of a miner is 1,667 kg. per shift and in the United States 2,140 kg., in the Donetz Basin it is only 1,053 kg. (A comparison of the average output of the Russian and the American worker will be found on page 280, footnote 1, and on page 344, footnote 1.)

manufacture. The special facilities granted to the *stakhanovists* frequently proved detrimental to the production as a whole. While tending to subordinate the entire national economy to this strict obeyance to the Plan, the Bolsheviks here abandoned this principle and allowed a free hand to simple operatives even when it was particularly important to keep them under guidance. The deception caused by *stakhanovism* has been especially felt in connection with the industrial results of 1937, as can be seen in the principal sovietic newspapers of the first few months of 1938. The *stakhanovists* produced from 150 per cent to 200 per cent of the standard output, but this did not prevent the industries and factories concerned from lagging behind the aggregate output foreseen by the Plan in that year.[1]

The *stakhanovists* are now earning good pay and enjoying many privileges.[2] The Government has found in the movement a means of effecting certain Budget economies, as well as a pretext for demanding a larger output from the average worker. However great may be the dependence in which the Soviet workers live, however blunted their class-consciousness, many of them still understand the disadvantages with which *stakhanovism* threatens them.[3]

1 *Izvestia*, January 30, 1938.

2 A great deal was said about the privileges of the *stakhanovists* at the *stakhanovist*-conference in November 1935 (see *For Industrialisation*, November 15 and 16, 1935). In December 1935 certain of the privileges were registered in a special resolution of the Central Council of Trade Unions. In virtue of that decision, *stakhanovists* are accorded priority (independent of the duration of their employment in the factory) when being sent to sanatoria, rest homes, resorts, etc. (*For Industrialisation*, December 17, 1935.) They are conceded the right, which is a particular honour in Soviet Russia, to take part in the "Kremlin Conferences." These conferences are thus described by Bukharin in the New Year issue of *Izvestia*: "The consultations of the Central Committee, the Pan-Union Conference of *stakhanovist* workmen and workwomen, the Congress of Agricultural *Stakhanovists*—all these are something new; new by the method of election, by the men who composed them, by the nature of the questions discussed, by their social significance. The elections to these conferences are quite peculiar and unprecedented, based as they are on the self-evident fact of outstanding work. Delegates are, so to speak, elected by tons and pieces of manufactured products. Thereby the working masses select their vanguard men, their talents, their best men. Is this not a real development of a great democracy, which rules the destinies of the country? For the first time in history, real democracy is being realized, and not its bourgeois substitute." (*Izvestia*, January 1, 1936.)

3 Soviet papers report numerous cases of "sabotage" against the *stakhanovists*, of which the following are examples. At the end of October 1935, at the "Ivan" mine, in the Makeievka district, in the Donetz Basin, Nikolai Vesnov, a *stakhanovist*, was murdered by three men whose acts of sabotage he had denounced. At the "Schwartzovka" mine, at about the same time, a locksmith named Sotsenko made an attempt to murder a *stakhanovist*, Sazonov, with whom he had an argument

The road leading to an improvement in the standard of living of the Soviet workers does not lie through the *stakhanovist* movement. Such an amelioration is primarily dependent upon an increase in the real value of wages. In the U.S.S.R., as in the classical "capitalist" countries, real wages depend nowadays not only on the amount of cash earned but also on the purchasing power of the money.

Monetary System: Depreciation of the Rouble. Inflation

The Soviet Government has declared repeatedly that, unlike capitalist currencies, the Soviet rouble is as solid and indestructible as granite. Grinko, the People's Commissar for Finance, declared in the autumn of 1935 that the Soviet rouble was "the most stable currency in the universal chaos of the capitalist world."[1] These statements are plainly contradicted by the facts.

The chervonetz rouble was maintained for a relatively short period at its official par value of 51·46 gold United States cents (as they stood prior to Roosevelt's devaluation).[2] The inflation which began in 1926 soon affected its purchasing power. This continued throughout the whole period of the First Five-Year Plan and became especially acute in 1928. Its extent may be judged by the amount of the monetary circulation, which constantly increased during this period[3] and by the disproportion between its increase and that of the country's commercial operations.

	Retail Trade Operations		*Monetary Circulation (Paper Money and Subsidiary Coins)*	
Years	*Million Roubles*	*Index*	*Million Roubles*	*Index*
1928	15,506·6	100	1,733·7	100
1929	17,417·1	112·3	2,313·6	133·4
1930	19,915·5	128·4	3,538·6	204·1
1931	27,465·2	177·1	4,821·0	278·1
1932	40,344·7	260·2	6,638·0	382·9

[*Footnote continued from previous page*

at the trade union conference. In the workmen's quarters of a cardboard box factory, a group of workers tried to burn alive, while he was asleep, the *stakhanovist* Soloviov. The Donetz railway mechanic, Krivonosov, who promoted the *stakhanovist* movement on railways, was "sent to Coventry" by his fellow workers. Afterwards fines were imposed on a number of people for deliberately preventing him from winning records. In Rostov-on-Don, a dirty broom was placed on the loom of one of the girl-*stakhanovists*, with the inscription "Here is a bouquet of flowers for having trebled the output." In Leningrad, at the "Skorokhod" factory, the workwomen systematically ragged one of their comrades, who was a *stakhanovist*.

In Nizhni Novgorod province, at the end of November 1935, the two brothers Kriuchkov were sentenced to death for murdering a *stakhanovist*.

1 Grinko, "The Abolition of Supply Cards and the Consolidation of the Rouble." (*Pravda*, October 6–7, 1935).

2 See p. 282.

3 The annual average figures of the monetary circulation are given on p. 338, footnote 3.

The table shows that the disproportion between the increase in the monetary circulation and the development of trade operations was especially marked in 1929 and 1930. Subsequently—in 1931 and 1932—the divergence between these two ascending movements became less pronounced.

The fall in the purchasing power of the rouble, consequent upon inflation, is most strikingly confirmed by the wholesale price indices as given in the Soviet statistics up to 1932. From the fact that they are based on the 1913 prices, these figures are particularly eloquent:

WHOLESALE PRICE INDICES

1913	100	1927–1928	156·9
1924–1925	128·8	1928–1929	161·4
1925–1926	149·9	1930	189·4
1926–1927	152·3	1931	197·5

The End of Inflation

The disproportionate rise in the monetary circulation ceased in 1933. From that year onwards the growth in the volume of the monetary circulation was slower than that of retail trade.

	Retail Trade Operations		*Monetary Circulation (Paper Money and Subsidiary Coins)*	
Years	*Million Roubles*	*Index*	*Million Roubles*	*Index*
1933	49,294·3	317·9	7,228	416·9
1934	61,322·0	395·5	7,255	418·5
1935	80,500·0	519·4	8,633	498·0
1936 (Plan)	100,000·0	645·2	—	—

Inflation, properly so-called, thus came to a standstill in the U.S.S.R. At the same time the country's output of gold displayed an upward tendency.

Gold Output

Mr. H. N. Laurie, the American expert on this subject, furnishes the following figures, from Soviet sources, as to the production of fine gold in the U.S.S.R.:[1]

Years	*Kilogrammes*	*Value in Gold Roubles*	*Percentage of Annual Increase*
1930	46,690	60,305,000	—
1931	51,500	66,517,000	10·3
1932	60,280	77,858,000	17·0
1933	84,000	108,494,000	39·3
1934	132,587	171,249,000	57·8
1935 (approx.)	182,000	235,000,000	37·3

1 The information supplied by Mr. Laurie with regard to the extraction of gold in the U.S.S.R. was published in the *Bulletin of the Economic Cabinet of Professor Prokopovich*, Prague, No. 129, p. 72.

According to these figures, during the period 1932–1935 the output of gold attained a combined total of 592,600,000 gold roubles, at the par value of 51·46 gold United States pre-Roosevelt cents.[1]

Trade Balance

During the same period another factor appeared which should also have helped to consolidate the purchasing power of the rouble. Since the introduction of the Second Five-Year Plan, the trade balance of Soviet Russia has become favourable. Still expressed in gold roubles (at the parity of 51·46 United States pre-Roosevelt cents), the balances of the years 1932–1935 are returned as follows:

Years	*Trade Balance*
1932—Deficit ..	129,100,000
1933—Surplus	146,700,000
1934—Surplus	185,900,000
1935—Surplus	126,000,000
Total surplus	329,500,000[2]

1 Official Soviet sources have furnished very little information as to the Soviet gold output. In December 1933, questioned by the American journalist, Walter Duranty, Stalin replied: "Our output of gold is already twice what it used to be in the days of Tsarism; it exceeds a hundred million gold roubles a year." In December 1936 Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, stated that this output had nearly trebled since 1931, and he confirmed the claim that the U.S.S.R. had taken the second place in the world output of gold. Finally, according to the sovietic Press, the amount of gold extracted in 1936 exceeded by 26 per cent the 1935 output, whereas the gold production of 1937 was only somewhat higher than twice the gold output of 1933. (*Industry*, April 10, 1938.)

The *Statistical Bulletin of the League of Nations* (April 1937) estimates the output of gold in the U.S.S.R. in 1935 at between 140,000 and 180,000 kilogrammes. According to the same source, the output of gold amounted, in 1935, to 335,000 kilogrammes in the mines of South Africa, to 106,000 kilogrammes in Canada, to 100,000 kilogrammes in the United States. Total world production, minus that of the U.S.S.R., was 775,000 kilogrammes.

In 1913 the Russian gold output totalled about 50,000 kilogrammes.

2 The Deputy Commissar for Foreign Trade, Merekalov, gives the following table showing the trend of Soviet trade from 1928 to 1936 in new chervonetz roubles (at the parity of 22·83 gold kopecks, see p. 366) with the addition of the figures for 1913 established in gold roubles.

Years	*Imports*	*Exports*	*Excess or Deficiency*
1913	6,596	6,023	+ 573
1928	3,519	4,175	− 656
1929	4,046	3,857	+ 189
1930	4,539	4,638	− 99
1931	3,553	4,840	− 1,287
1932	2,518	3,084	− 566
1933	2,168	1,525	+ 643
1934	1,832	1,018	+ 814
1935	1,609	1,057	+ 552
1936	1,359	1,353	+ 6

(*Izvestia*, April 21, 1938.)

[*Footnote continued on page* 353

By comparison with the First Five-Year Plan, the imports of foreign goods have decreased considerably under the Second Plan. The following figures show the volume of foreign imports from 1933 to 1937 in gold roubles:

	Million		*Million*
1933	348·2	1936	304·4[1]
1934	232·4	1937	306·2
1935	241·4		

The total imports during the Second Five-Year Plan thus represent about 36 per cent of the 4,000 million roubles to which the imports amounted under the First Five-Year Plan, according to the statement made by Rosengoltz, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade.[2] Rosengoltz attributed this extraordinary falling off of imports solely to the development of national industry, which was beginning to produce in Russia a considerable part of the machines, tools, and other products needed by the U.S.S.R. From the experience gained under the Second Five-Year Plan, Rosengoltz drew the conclusion that Russia "will be in a position to carry out the Third Five-Year Plan almost entirely without imports."

Rosengoltz's explanations of the curtailment of imports are obviously insufficient. The progress of Soviet industry was not the only cause of the decrease in imports of machinery and tools under the Second Five-Year Plan; it was the consequence of the notable cutting down of the volume of factory and other industrial construction, the appreciable effects of which on the number of workers and employees engaged in building have already been dealt with.[3]

On the other hand, it is not possible to agree with the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade that any reduction in imports is in itself a benefit and must be striven for whatever the situation may be. Under the First Five-Year Plan, when imports were particularly large, entries of foreign articles of large consumption were kept considerably below the level demanded by the needs of the popular

The exports in 1937 attained, in chervonetz roubles, 1,533·6 millions and the imports 1,341·3 millions, leaving a credit balance of 192·3 millions, not counting 195 millions received from Japan for the sale of the Northern Manchurian Railway, formerly owned by Russia. (*Pravda*, March 21, 1938.) As compared with pre-war conditions, the foreign trade has enormously decreased.

1 For 1933, 1934, and 1935 see *Statistics of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R.*; and for 1936 see *Pravda*, February 4, 1937.

2 *Pravda*, November 25, 1936.

3 See pp. 280–281.

masses. At that time this restriction of imports was attributed by the official commentators to the imperative necessity for concentrating all efforts on the purchase of foreign equipment for the plants and factories under construction. Yet, although the Second Five-Year Plan had resulted in a large reduction of total imports, the percentage of articles of large consumption remained as small as before.[1] The trade balance having now become favourable, the Soviet Government prefers to add a few million roubles to its surplus rather than to import articles of prime necessity, and even medical supplies, of which the population had long been deprived. Moreover, for the purchase of such articles the Government has at its disposal not only the surplus of the trade balance but also its gold, the output of which is constantly increasing. It, however, deems fit to use this gold for other purposes. In present conditions this policy is a brutal and manifest disregard of the vital interests of the nation.[2]

Balance of Payments

In connection with the trade balance a short mention should be made here of the balance of payments of the U.S.S.R.

On June 3, 1936, *Pravda* published a summary of this balance for 1935. In compliance with the decree of February 29, 1936,[3] the statement was drawn up in new roubles at the par of 22·83 gold kopecks (equal at that time to three "Poincaré" francs). We have added the figures of the balance of payments for 1936, which appeared in the *Monthly Review* of the U.S.S.R. Trade Delegation in London for April 1938.

Receipts	*1935*	*1936*
	Million	*Roubles*
Exports of goods	1,800	1,497
Receipts from transport and insurances	76	92
Non-commercial money remittances (aid to sovietic citizens from relatives abroad, etc.) ..	62	7
Expenditure by foreigners in U.S.S.R. ..	29	35
Other receipts ..	165	32
Sale of gold abroad	52	—
Total ..	2,184	1,659

1 In 1936 89·1 per cent of the total imports represented production means and material, and only 10·9 per cent commodities intended for consumption. (*Pravda*, February 4, 1937.)

2 The export of oil from the U.S.S.R. tends to decrease owing to its increasing consumption in view of the development of all sorts of motive power in the country. It was in 1932 over 6 million tons and in 1937 only about 2 million tons.

3 See page 366.

Expenditure	1935 Million	1936 Roubles
Imports of goods (transport and insurance included) ..	860	1,328
Budget expenditure abroad (upkeep of U.S.S.R. representatives abroad, etc.)	57	55
Interest paid on foreign credits	89	44
Foreign technical co-operation (in connection with the installation and assembling of new industrial equipment) ..	23	23
Other expenditure	—	62
Total	1,029	1,512
Sinking Fund on payments of foreign credits	1,005	—
Total	2,034	
Surplus of the balance of payments	150	151

As these figures show, the balance of payments of the U.S.S.R. is entirely dependent on foreign trade. It contains no item concerning the international circulation of private capital, nor does it show any private expenditure abroad; the reason being that, as a rule, sovietic citizens are not authorized to leave the territory of the U.S.S.R.[1]

1 The summary of the balance of payments for 1935 published by *Pravda* is not entirely in accord with the figures of the trade balance quoted above in our text. According to the latter the surplus of exports amounted, in 1935, to 126,000,000 gold roubles, or 560,000,000 roubles at the par of 22·83 gold kopecks. On the other hand, according to *Pravda* the surplus amounted to 940 millions of the latter roubles (1,800 – 860 = 940). This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that *Pravda* figures comprise, on the export side, 380 million roubles (at 22·83 gold kopecks) coming from foreign credits connected with trade operations abroad. In this case it would be necessary to deduct an identical sum, i.e. 380 million gold roubles (at 22·83 gold kopecks) from the amount paid in 1935 towards sinking fund payments on foreign credits, thus reducing it from 1,005 millions to 625 million such roubles.

Some light on this subject may also be obtained from figures published in the same number of the *Monthly Review* for April 1938. It gives the following table concerning the international capital accounts of the U.S.S.R. for the same years:

Receipts	In Million 1935	Roubles 1936
Repatriation of capital from abroad ..	—	71
Receipts from State loans placed abroad	8	—
Receipts from commercial credits	—	242
Total	8	313
Excess of expenditure over income	1,005	119
	1,013	432
Disbursements		
Redemption of State loans and concession bonds	—	46
Settlements of commercial credits ..	694	354
Reduction of short-term and bank credit	319	32
Total ..	1,013	432

[*Footnote continued on page* 356

For the four years, 1932–1935, the output of gold (592·6 millions) and the trade balances (329·5 millions) furnished the Soviet Government with a total sum of 922 million gold roubles. Finally, a sum of 270 million gold roubles was received in foreign exchange and gold, during the same period, through the channel of the *Torgsin*.[1] The addition of these amounts gives a total of 1,192 million gold roubles as having been received by the U.S.S.R. in 1932–1935.[2]

It is true that, during the same period, the State repaid a considerable part of its foreign credits and brought these down to 140,000,000 gold roubles. As to the exact amount of these liabilities, the statements made by Rosengoltz, the Commissar for Foreign Trade, have varied. In 1935 he asserted that they had reached their highest point at the end of 1931, when they amounted to 1,400,000,000 gold roubles.[3] It appears from an article written by the same high official, however, in *Pravda*, at the end of 1936, that the figures previously furnished by him were inexact, and that the foreign liabilities of the U.S.S.R. amounted, on January 1, 1932, to 2,371,000,000 gold roubles.[4]

Nevertheless, the payment of foreign debts did not affect to any appreciable degree the reserve of gold and foreign currencies accumulated in 1932–1935, as mentioned above. The Government discovered a way of settling a large part of its liabilities without drawing upon this reserve. Instead of so doing, it utilized the credits which foreign bankers and brokers had accorded to it against security in merchandise. Soviet official statistics regard all consign-

Footnote continued from page 355]

The same *Monthly Review* adds the following comments: "While in 1935 about 15 per cent of the import was still purchased on short-term credit bills, in 1936 all suppliers of goods to the Soviet Union were paid in cash. The receipt of financial credits facilitated to some extent this change in operations. However, payments from such credits only formed 18·7 per cent of the total disbursement for imports. In addition, certain quantities of import goods were delivered on account of the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Settlements with firms for goods supplied on credit were reduced in 1936 to approximately one-half of the figure for the preceding year—354 million roubles, as compared with 694 millions. As far as short-term export and bank credits are concerned, . . . the reduction in 1936 amounted to 32 million roubles, as compared with 319 million roubles in 1935. . . . As a result . . . the indebtedness of the U.S.S.R. to foreign countries at the beginning of 1937 amounted to a very small sum."

1 For details about the *Torgsin*, see p. 365.

2 During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, imports amounted to 3,951,700,000 gold roubles and exports to 3,652,700,000 gold roubles, the trade balance thus resulting in a deficit of 329,000,000 gold roubles.

3 *Pravda*, November 7, 1935.

4 Ibid., November 25, 1936.

ments of exports abroad as cash sales from the moment the goods have crossed the frontier, and their payment is at once anticipated as revenue from foreign trade returns. As a matter of fact, however, such consignments sometimes remain for a year or two in the warehouses of the Soviet Trade Delegations abroad (*Torgpredstvo*). In order to mobilize at least some part of their value, the Trade Delegations use them as security for foreign credits, which are afterwards repaid from the proceeds of the sale—sometimes at a loss—of the commodities in question. There is ground for believing that a large proportion of the Soviet foreign debts have been paid off in this way.

Persistent Fall in Purchasing Power of the Rouble

It should be noted that during recent years the national Budget has invariably shown an excess of receipts over expenditure. All these factors taken together—the Budget surplus, the considerable credit balance on foreign trade, the rapidly growing output of gold, the large reserve of gold and foreign exchange at the State Bank,[1] to which must also be added the reduced industrial production cost—should have helped towards counteracting the fall of the chervonetz rouble and to lessen the increase in the cost of living. Yet, although inflation was stopped and there were indications of a possible financial recuperation, the fall in the value of the rouble persisted, and the official parity of 51·46 United States cents tended to become more and more fictitious.

The artificial value of the chervonetz rouble, fixed at over one-fifth of the gold rouble, becomes particularly evident from the enormous discrepancy between the prices at which Soviet articles of large consumption are sold in the world market in gold roubles and the prices of the same commodities as sold in chervonetz roubles in the Russian State shops and co-operatives (see table overleaf).

Thus the Soviet Government finds it advantageous to sell abroad for a few gold kopecks goods which would realize on the home market a much larger price, not in kopecks but in chervonetz roubles.

If the purchasing power of the rouble was not stabilized, even after 1933, when the situation was favourable for such an operation; if, even after that date, the prices of foodstuffs and of industrial

1 See previous pages, 339.

	Wholesale Export Prices (in Gold Kopecks)	*Trade Prices in Moscow (in Chervonetz Kopecks)*	
	(per Kilogramme of 2·2 lb.)		
	8 months of 1935	*1934*	*January 1935*
Oats	2·8	—	75
Rice ..	8·2	1,200	1,000
Wheat flour	3·7	—	260
Millet ..	3·6	500	300
Buckwheat meal	4·0	700	500
Pork	36·3 (bacon)	900	1,600
Poultry	35·7	600	1,400
Butter ..	31·4	2,700	2,600
Sunflower oil	10·6	2,400	2,400
Crystallized sugar	7·9	1,000	650
Refined sugar	7·6	1,200	750
Common salt	0·4	—	—
Household soap	16·0	500	—
Petroleum	1·6	—	—

products destined for the home market continued to rise, the reason is to be found in the first place in the very special methods by which retail prices are established in the U.S.S.R.

Retail Prices of Common Necessaries

On the monopolized market of the U.S.S.R., the prices of commodities, including the common necessaries of existence, depend neither on their cost of production nor on the law of supply and demand. They are fixed in accordance with the Government's "Plan," and constitute a means of distributing and redistributing the national income between the different categories of the population.[1] The Government departments take into consideration certain factors in determining retail prices, but this does not alter their artificial character. In practice the prices of articles of large consumption are made up from three elements: the price paid by the State for produce taken under compulsory deliveries, the commercial profit, and the turnover tax. The size of each of these items is artificial, inasmuch as it is determined exclusively by the requirements of the Government's economic policy.

1 In his article, "Finance at the Culminating Point of the Second Five-Year Plan" (*Planned Economy*, 1935, No. 4, p. 98), Professor Bogolepov shows that prices in the U.S.S.R. by their very structure "differ fundamentally from those obtaining in a market dominated by the anarchical fluctuations of supply and demand. They are decreed by the Central Government within the limits of the socialized sector. They represent in themselves a plan: a given instruction expressed by figures. This plan and this instruction determine that the prices must redistribute the national income in the interests of the building up of Socialism."

At present the fixing of retail prices is the result of the interplay between the very low sums paid to the peasants by the State as purchaser of its compulsory deliveries, and the scale of the different rates of turnover tax levied by the same State as vendor.

One of the peculiarities of the Soviet market in 1933–1935 was the co-existence of "normalized" prices and "commercial" prices, both categories being, of course, State regulated. Normalized prices were applied to the sale of commodities to the privileged classes of the population only—to workers and employees receiving foodstuffs and articles of personal consumption on supply-cards—as well as to foreigners residing in the U.S.S.R. and paying for their purchases in foreign currency. Commercial prices were in operation for the rest of the population, as well as for anybody who wanted to buy quantities in excess of those to which their cards entitled them. The name "commercial" merely denotes that these prices were in use in State stores open to all comers.

At the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan the normalized prices established for workers and employees were rather low, although superior to the prices paid for compulsory deliveries, but the divergence between the two gradually increased and became very large towards the end of this First Plan. The commercial prices were substantially higher than normalized prices reserved for the workers and employees, and generally greatly in excess of the prices paid by the Government for compulsory deliveries owing to the heavy rate of the turnover tax which weighed on them.

Correlation Among the Three Kinds of Prices

The table overleaf illustrates the high cost of living caused by this system of fixed prices, and particularly owing to the incorporation in them of the turnover tax. This table reveals the enormous increase in the prices of necessaries as compared with the very low prices paid by the Government for its compulsory deliveries drawn from the peasants, as well as the large augmentation of those applied to certain products of heavy industry when retailed, such as, for instance, petroleum.

The typical example of butter enables us to see clearly the extent to which this system of artificial prices makes the products dear. The State Committee for Compulsory Deliveries paid the peasants 2·5 chervonetz roubles per kilogramme for butter, and resold it to privileged consumers—workers and employees—at the normalized

PRICES PER KILOGRAMME (2·2 LB.) AT MOSCOW

(In gold kopecks for 1913, in chervonetz kopecks for the other years)

	Prices for 1913*	Prices paid for Compulsory Deliveries 1934–1935	"Normalized" Prices 1932†	"Normalized" Prices 1934‡	"Commercial" Prices 1932†	"Commercial" Prices 1934‡
Oats	5·2	5·5	—	—	—	—
Rice (first quality)	26·9	—	—	115	230	1,200
Wheat flour (96 per cent grinding)	12·2	10·1 (wheat)	19	72	—	—
Rye flour (96 per cent grinding)	7·3	6·4 (rye)	14	66	—	—
Wheat bread (96 per cent grinding)	—	—	17·5	60	400	300
Rye bread (96 per cent grinding)	7·3	—	12·5	50	250	150
Millet (first quality)	9·8	5·8	30	27	90–100	500
Buckwheat groats ..	17·1	6·9	35	32	100–110	700
Potatoes	4·9	—	—	25	—	125
Beef (best quality) ..	46·4	—	212	328	600	570
Pork (best quality)	46·4	—	303	460	—	900
Poultry ..	—	—	515	515	—	600
Milk (litre or 1·76 pints)	—	15	—	—	85–100	80
Fresh butter	114·8	250	466	800	1,600–1,800	2,700
Sunflower oil	31·7	—	170	270	450–500	2,400
Eggs (dozen)	29·0	—	100	180	—	350
Crystallized sugar ..	29·3	—	95	200	250	1,000
Refined sugar	34·2	—	125	250	300	1,200
Kitchen-salt	2·4	—	8	11	—	—
Household soap	36·6	—	—	200	720	500
Petroleum	12·2	—	22	47	—	—

* *Bulletin of the Economic Survey Institute*, 1922, p. 4; M. Ignatiev, *Conjuncture and Prices*, 1925, pp. 121 and 136.

† *Year Book of Retail and Complementary Prices in the Moscow Region*, Moscow, 1932.

‡ *Year Book of Wholesale and Retail Prices of Foodstuffs in the Moscow Region*, 1934.

price of eight roubles, whereas the ordinary customers had to pay the commercial price of 27 roubles.[1]

Price Reform of 1935

In 1935 the Government carried out an important reform in connection with commodity prices. On January 1st of that year "uniform State prices" were substituted for both "normalized" and "commercial" prices in regard to bread, flour, and groats. On October 1st of the same year, uniform selling tariffs were also applied to meats, fats, fish, sugar, and potatoes.

The relation between the old normalized and commercial prices and the new uniform ones is indicated in the following table (in chervonetz kopecks):

	Normalized Prices 1934	*Commercial Prices 1934*	*Uniform Prices October 1935*
Rice (best quality)	115	1,200	650
Wheat flour (96 per cent grinding)	72	—	180
Rye flour (96 per cent grinding)	66	—	160
Wheat bread (96 per cent grinding)	60	300	100
Rye bread	50	150	85
Millet (best quality)	27	500	210
Buckwheat groats ..	32	700	430

Though the uniform State prices established in 1935 for retail trade in certain foodstuffs were considerably below the commercial prices of 1934, they exceeded considerably the normalized prices previously in operation. The Treasury could only gain by this reform: thanks to the abolition of the normalized prices, the State was able to increase its receipts still further by the difference between the sale prices and the prices paid by the Government for its compulsory deliveries, whose low level was not affected by the 1935 reform.[2] It is true that the State's profits on "uniform prices"

1 The foodstuffs brought to the markets by the peasants and obtained from their small private plots were sold at still higher prices, for their supply was greatly inferior to the demand of the town populations. "By comparison with 1928, the prices of produce sold in the markets had risen, in 1931, in the ratio of 1 to 6·3. . . . Early in 1933 the prices obtained in the market were from 12 to 15 times higher than the normalized prices." (*Planned Economy*, 1935, No. 8, p. 93.)

2 If, in addition to the products cited above, we turn to such a largely consumed and indispensable commodity as sugar, we shall realize the enormous margin of profit which the Government reserves for itself. According to the 1935 data, a kilogramme of crystallized sugar costs the economic organs of the U.S.S.R. only 63 kopecks. The monopoly system enables the State shops to sell it at 4 roubles 20 kopecks (October 1935). Thus, the tax paid by the consumer into the State

were nearly halved as compared with those made on "commercial" prices, but this lack of gain was more than compensated by the increased volume of commercial sales as the result of the suppression of the normalized prices on the majority of the most generally consumed foodstuffs.

According to Soviet statistics, the proportional volume of these "commercial sales," in the total volume of retail trade, was increased as follows:

	Per cent
In 1931	2·7
„ 1932	10·8
„ 1933	14·7
„ 1934	24·2 (estimated)

In 1934 "normalized" sales represented still 75·8 per cent of total consumption. Under the Plan their volume should have fallen in 1935, as a result of the reform of prices, to only 7 per cent, that is to say, they should have decreased to one-eleventh.[1] In the same year the volume of sales at "uniform State prices"—applied henceforward to all purchasers—should, according to the Plan, have increased to 93 per cent of the whole; in other words, quadrupled them. The table on p. 361 shows that the level of those "uniform prices" was only 50 per cent below that of the "commercial prices" of formerly, while the former exceeded by a much larger percentage the old "normalized prices." The effect of "uniform State prices," therefore, was not to bring prices down, but very largely to increase the cost of living throughout the U.S.S.R.

The Second Five-Year Plan proclaimed "the policy of lower prices"; but the Soviet Government has not yet succeeded in reducing the cost of living. This failure found convincing confirmation in figures published on May 9, 1937, in the columns of the journal *Light Industry*, which for nearly eighteen months had remained completely mute on the subject of prices of articles of large consumption. These figures are all the more interesting from the fact that they were accompanied by an official endeavour to show that "the policy of lower prices" has led to brilliant results in 1937. This Soviet publication asserted that, "in 1937, for the same amount of money, it is possible to buy two and a half times

Budget amounts to 3 roubles 67 kopecks per kilogramme. In 1936 the sale price of beef (young animals) was composed of 23 per cent representing the costings (i.e. the price paid to the *kolkhozes* for compulsory delivery plus the overhead expense of the State meat trade), and 77 per cent representing Government turnover tax.

1 About limited maintenance of supply-cards, see p. 376.

more commodities than in 1933." This statement is merely a fresh instance of the method systematically used by the Soviet Government deliberately to mislead those who are always prepared to accept official assertions without question.

In order to prove the exactitude of its statement that the cost of living had fallen by over 50 per cent, as compared with 1933, the light industry journal draws a parallel between two sets of figures which are absolutely incommensurable, viz., the "commercial" prices of 1933 and the "uniform State prices" of 1937. The fact is that in 1933 the great mass of articles of large consumption was available to consumers at "normalized" prices which were greatly below those applied in 1937, as quoted in the number of the publication referred to for May 9, 1937.[1] The only deduction to be drawn from the figures given by *Light Industry* is diametrically opposed to that which the Soviet Government seeks to establish. In reality, the cost of living was incomparably higher in 1937 than it was four years earlier. In 1933, the working classes bought nearly 90 per cent of their foodstuffs and manufactured articles at "normalized" prices. To-day they are obliged to spend nearly double the amount they had to pay in 1933 for the common necessaries of life.[2]

Moreover, the figures furnished by *Light Industry* refute the alleged reduction in prices. They show, in fact, that for the most essential

1 *Light Industry* (May 9, 1937) published the following table of prices of articles of large consumption:

Articles per Kilo. (or 2·2 lb.)	*1933: "Commercial Prices" (in Roubles)*	*1937: "Uniform State Prices" (in Roubles)*
Rye bread ..	2·50	0·85
Wheat bread	3·00	1·00
Flour	4·50	2·50
Groats	5·50	2·50
Beef	12·00	7·60
Sausages	20·00	11·00
Butter	42·00	16·50
Sugar	15·00	4·00
Pastries	15·00	6·40
Household soap, 1 tablet	2·65	1·55
Toilet soap, 1 tablet	1·30	0·80
Tobacco (poor quality), 1 packet ..	1·00	0·50

2 In 1933, the worker bought 90 per cent of his bread at 60 kopecks per kilogramme (at normalized prices) and the remaining 10 per cent at 3 roubles (at commercial prices); in 1937 the whole of his bread costs him 1 rouble per kilogramme (at uniform prices). In 1933 he paid 8 roubles per kilogramme for butter; in 1937 it costs him 16 roubles 50 kopecks. In 1933 90 per cent of his sugar cost him 2 roubles per kilogramme and 10 per cent of it 10 roubles per kilogramme; in 1937 every kilogramme costs 4 roubles.

items in the people's budget the "uniform State prices" remained, in 1937, at the same level as in October 1935. The following prices per kilogramme have not changed: rye bread, 85 kopecks; wheat bread, 1 rouble; beef, 7 roubles 60 kopecks; butter, 16 roubles 50 kopecks. For certain other articles the prices were even raised between 1935 and 1937: wheat flour, for instance, increased from 1 rouble 80 kopecks to 2 roubles 90 kopecks per kilogramme; sugar, however, went somewhat down from 4 roubles 20 kopecks to 4 roubles per kilogramme.[1]

As already explained, the "reform of prices" in 1935 has permitted the Treasury to increase, by means of the turnover tax, the amount it appropriates on the selling price of the fundamental mass of products. This plainly shows that the price reform was designed to raise the State revenue, and not at all to bring down the high cost of living, or to enhance the purchasing power of the rouble.

The reform of 1935 was further intended to bring about a change by which the wages and their increase would become a more "decisive stimulus for the workers and employees."[2] The disappearance of the impersonal card system made the material situation of the workers more directly dependent on the amount of their individual

1 In drawing a comparison between the Soviet prices of 1935 and 1937, it is necessary to bear in mind that *Light Industry*, in its above-quoted issue, carefully avoids indicating the quality of the articles which it compares, or the region ("territorial zone") to which the prices refer. It is obvious, however, that these details are of capital importance in drawing objective conclusions in regard to the movement of prices. Thus, for instance, the price of sugar fluctuated, in 1935, between 4 roubles 20 kopecks and 5 roubles 50 kopecks per kilogramme according to the zone. As regards millet it was sold at any price between 1 rouble 50 kopecks and 2 roubles 60 kopecks, according to quality, and buckwheat meal from 3 roubles 80 kopecks to 4 roubles 80 kopecks. Had the Soviet statistical service possessed unquestionable data illustrating the fall in prices, it would not have omitted presenting them. The fact that it does not supply such data implicitly shows that prices did not decrease in 1937.

A resolution of the Council of People's Commissars applicable since June 1, 1937, declared a certain reduction of prices for numerous articles of general consumption. In this connection *Pravda* (issue of June 2, 1937) observed: "Cotton wool and flax, tissues, boots, galoshes, sewing-machines, perfumery, soap, gramophones, furs, sports articles, cigarettes, matches, electric bulbs, and window glass are sold to-day at from 5 to 16 per cent cheaper than before." As may be seen from this enumeration, foodstuffs did not benefit from this decrease, which is unable to modify the high general level of the cost of living.

Generally speaking, the prices of the necessaries of life appertain to the most obscure feature of Soviet statistics and this in spite of the fact that it is precisely the policy of prices, together with that of taxation, which forms the basis of the financing of all sovietic State expenditure.

2 This formula was used by Molotov at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Party, held in November 1934. (*Izvestia*, November 30, 1934.)

earnings, or, in other words, on their efforts. The suppression of supply-cards, decreed by Stalin in 1935, had in its essence nothing in common with a similar step taken by Lenin in 1921. At that time, Lenin was trying to restore the free sale of agricultural produce in the markets in order to foster the development of economic initiative among the peasantry. The reform of 1935 pursued an entirely different economic object. It gave absolutely nothing to the peasants. Industry alone was to benefit from the change. Indeed, the Planning Commission expected that "the creation of uniform prices would create a basis for the final liquidation of the parasitical tendencies existing in the organs of production and distribution, and among certain categories of workers, as well as for the definite liquidation of the equalitarian remuneration of labour."[1]

Liquidation of the Torgsin

In the course of the same year, 1935, the Government issued another edict which acted, in its turn, on the fate of the rouble. The decree of November 14, 1935, laid down that the *Torgsin* would be suppressed as from February 1, 1936, and that its chain of shops be transferred to the Commissariat for Internal Trade. The *Torgsin* was a commercial organization which had been established to sell, on Soviet territory—against foreign exchange or gold—foodstuffs and articles for consumption to foreigners and even to Russians who happened to dispose of gold or foreign exchange.[2] The abolition of this organization, therefore, affected only a small number of foreigners—resident in the U.S.S.R. or tourists—as well as a few Russians. Nevertheless, the decree of November 14th had a considerable importance. In fact, it empowered the State Bank to apply in 1936 a new rate of exchange for transfers and cash payments in foreign currencies. Instead of the par of 51·46 pre-Roosevelt United States cents, or, in French currency of the period, 13·20 "Poincaré" francs, which made this franc equal to 7·6 kopecks, the rouble was thenceforward established at the par of three such French francs.[3]

1 *National Economy Plan for 1935*, pp. 63–64.

2 This foreign exchange in Russian hands generally had as its source remittances sent in aid to Soviet citizens from relatives abroad. See above U.S.S.R.'s balance of payments, p. 354.

3 It will be remembered that the measure for currency reform introduced by M. Poincaré on June 25, 1928, fixed the gold contents of the franc at 58·95 milligrammes of fine gold. At the end of 1935 and beginning of 1936, this "Poincaré" franc was quoted at 75 to the pound and 15 to the dollar. Three French francs were therefore, at that time, worth about 10d. or 20 United States cents.

This corresponded, at the counters of the *Torgsin*, to a depreciation of the rouble to 22·83 gold kopecks, or to a loss of 77·17 per cent, as compared with the gold rouble.

Devaluation of the Chervonetz Rouble

This measure was equivalent to an official admission of the fall in the purchasing power of the chervonetz rouble, and was the precursor of its devaluation. Indeed, on February 29, 1936, a decree of the Council of People's Commissars laid down that the new rate of exchange of the rouble (22·83 gold kopecks, equivalent to 0·17685 gramme of pure gold, or three "Poincaré" francs) would henceforth be applied to all import and export settlements, and also to all exchange operations. Subsequently, the rate of exchange in francs was naturally modified to conform with the "alignment" of the franc effected on September 26, 1936. On October 29, 1936, *Izvestia* announced that "in view of the devaluation of the franc, the exchange of foreign currencies against the chervonetz, the settlement of exports and imports, and all other exchange operations, would henceforth be effected on the basis of the rouble equivalent to 4·25 French francs" (which at that time were spoken of as "Auriol francs").[1]

The amputation of the rouble in 1936 by 77·17 per cent of its earlier value certainly does not in full measure reflect its true depreciation. How far its internal purchasing power yet remains below the official rate is seen, be it only from the prices given in preceding pages.[2] The export of roubles from the U.S.S.R., as well as their import from abroad, were and still are prohibited. This interdiction in itself testifies that the official level of the rouble con-

1 The new devaluation of the franc carried out by M. Auriol on October 1, 1936, brought this currency down to a weight varying between 38·7 and 44·1 milligrammes of fine gold. This "Auriol" franc was maintained at a rate of about 21 francs to the dollar and 105 to the pound sterling. (Since the price of gold in London was at that time maintained around 140 shillings per ounce, the gold content of the "Auriol" franc amounted to about 42 milligrammes of fine gold.) Therefore, when the official rate of the rouble was fixed at 4¼ "Auriol" francs, its official dollar and sterling parity remained as before, namely, 20 United States cents or 10d. A subsequent French devaluation of July 1, 1937, having put an end to the "Auriol" franc, replaced it by the "Bonnet" franc which eventually depreciated. The official quotation of the rouble in Moscow remained approximately at the above level of about 10d. or 20 United States cents.

2 For the prices of articles of great consumption see pp. 383–386 and 408. The purchasing power of the rouble is also treated later on pages 383–386 and 387.

tinues to be artificial.[1] In any case, the devaluation of 1936 should for some time silence all statements to the effect that the rouble is "the most stable currency in the world."[2]

Problem of the Stabilization of the Chervonetz-Rouble

The future alone can decide whether the Soviet Government will succeed in definitely stabilizing the chervonetz rouble on its new official level. In any case, the situation of the Russian national economy was in 1936 much more favourable towards currency reform than at the time when the chervonetz rouble was introduced.

The devaluation of the rouble, provided it remains stable, will give the Soviet Government many advantages in the foreign markets. On the other hand, it has not had in itself any direct repercussion on the home market. It will not modify the extremely low level of the payments made by the State for the compulsory deliveries. An increase in the prices paid would be possible here only if the Government radically modified its policy in regard to agriculture and the peasantry. Nor will the stabilization of the rate of the rouble abroad affect internal Soviet prices, the level of which is regulated by the State in a manner to assure the greater part of its Budget receipts. Stabilization will therefore bring no change to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. But the fact that the rouble is now alleged to be equal to 22·83 gold kopecks will enable them to calculate, by a simple arithmetical operation, the gold prices of the various commodities. They will then see that in the U.S.S.R.—where, according to the assertions of the Bolshevik leaders, the "building up of Socialism" is now approaching completion—foodstuffs cost much more than they did in pre-war Russia. In comparison with 1913 (and expressed in gold

1 Early in 1937 the foreign "black bourses" quoted the rouble at about 1 franc 20 cents (in French "Auriol" francs), i.e. very nearly what its real purchasing power amounts to.

2 In view of the devaluation carried out in February 1936, a revaluation was made of the gold and foreign exchange cover of the note circulation. On October 1, 1935, the State Bank held for this purpose a reserve of gold and platinum amounting to 970,800,000 gold roubles (at the par of 51·46 United States pre-Roosevelt cents) and foreign currencies for 34,700,000 of the same roubles. The devaluation enabled the Government to withdraw about 500,000 kilogrammes of gold from the State Bank reserve, and so far the destination of this amount is unknown. The gold held by the State Bank totalled on April 1, 1936, only 249,000 kilogrammes, or 1,404,000,000 of new roubles (at the par of 22·83 gold kopecks). In addition, the State Bank held, at the time, 113,800,000 new roubles worth of foreign currencies (according to figures published in the *Monthly Review* by the Soviet Trade Delegation in London).

kopecks) the prices of the principal foodstuffs in Moscow in 1935–1936 were as follows:

Articles (per kilogramme = 2·2 lb.)	*1913*	*1935–1936*	*Increase per cent*
Rye bread ..	7·3	19·1	261
Buckwheat groats	17·1	96·8	566
Meat	46·4	171·0	368
Butter	114·8	371·0	323
Granulated sugar	29·3	90·0	307

Since 1932 the high cost of living in the U.S.S.R. has been the direct and inevitable consequence of the heavy turnover tax and of the high prices determined by it. No appreciable reduction of these high prices can be expected as long as the Soviet Government continues to base its revenue on such prices, and to draw from them the enormous resources necessary to cover the cost of its Socialistic experiment.

Wages Under the Successive Changes in the Bolshevik "Line"

Since the day when the Soviet Government abandoned the system of supply-cards, and substituted uniform State prices for normalized and commercial ones, the real level of working-class wages became closely bound up with the price-list which the State shops and the co-operatives applied to the sale of foodstuffs and other articles of consumption.

The card system was devised by the Soviet Government for the purpose of placing the workers in a privileged position on the background of general destitution. The Government saw in it "a measure designed to restrict the consumption of these commodities by the non-working population, and to favourize, in the first place, the satisfaction of the needs of the industrial workers."[1] The supply-card system began to be introduced into the various towns of the U.S.S.R. in the spring of 1928, after the *N.E.P.* In 1929, by order of the Central Government, the sale at normalized prices of bread, groats, sugar, animal and vegetable oil, herrings, textiles, manufactured articles, household soap, eggs, meat, and potatoes, was applied in all the towns of the Union.[2] The card system certainly

1 Resolution of the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Party, December 1930.

2 *Soviet Trade*, 1934, No. 7–8, p. 15. The list of articles distributed to holders of cards became longer and longer as time went on.

served the purpose which the Communist Party intended. It ensured to the workers more ample supplies than to the rest of the population. For the workers' sake, the feeding of the rural masses was so reduced, in quantity and in quality, that a single year of poor crops was sometimes sufficient to cause the country-side to suffer from a veritable famine, as was the case in both 1931 and 1932.

Thanks to the supply-cards, as long as they existed, the rouble had, in the hands of the town working classes, a much greater purchasing power than in those of the peasants. The money value of the workers' wages was therefore insufficient in itself to entirely measure their material situation. Besides, they benefited in addition to the wages from substantial subsidiary advantages which they received from the State. However, as long as the normalized prices remained relatively low—that is to say, during the first years of industrialization—any pecuniary increase in wages obviously represented a certain real improvement in the industrial workers' material welfare.

From 1928 to 1936 the nominal amounts of workers' wages in large-scale industry (exclusive of clerical and technical staffs) were increased (in monthly averages) as follows:[1]

Years	*Roubles*	*Years*	*Roubles*
1928	69	1933	126
1929	75	1934	147
1930	83	1935	185
1931	96	1936	225
1932	115		

In this connection it is necessary to bear in mind that, in arriving at the average nominal wages, the Soviet statisticians take into account the exceptionally high rates of wages paid to the privileged categories of workers, such as "shock-workers," *stakhanovists*, etc. The actual wages of the ordinary worker are considerably below the average of these official statistics, but it was necessary to wait until the promulgation of the decree of November 1, 1937—published in *Pravda* on the following day—for official data on the minimum

1 *Labour in the U.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1936, p. 96. The figure of 1936 was computed on the basis of the percentage of increase in average wages in 1936, as compared with those of 1935. This percentage is given by *Planned Economy*, 1937, No. 1, p. 209. For 1937 the Plan forecast "an increase in workers' and employees' wages by 7·4 per cent over the 1936 level." In May 1937, however (according to *Problems of the Professional Movement*, Moscow, 1937, No. 20), the average of workers' wages in large-scale industry was only 231 roubles.

level of wages. This decree is entitled: "On the increase of wages in industry and transports, in favour of the low-tariff categories of workers and employees." The decree ordains that the rates of wages shall be recast in such a manner that monthly pay shall not fall below 115 roubles for regular employment, or below 110 roubles when paid for piecework. It is true that the decree stipulates that these sums shall not include premiums and bonuses which the workers in question might earn. But, as we have seen, additions to wages presuppose an output in excess of a fixed minimum standard and thus constitute the remuneration—not to say the reward—for an achievement exceeding the normal. Moreover, this increase is not taken into consideration in the computation of bonuses, overtime work, seniority premiums, or extra allowances for residence in distant parts of the country, etc.

In order to cover additional expenditure resulting from these new regulations, the decree provides for extra credits under the Budget amounting to 600,000,000 roubles per annum. The fact is thus officially recognized that before November 1937 there were toilers who did not earn more than 110 or 115 roubles a month, and that since then there are workers who do not earn more than this low figure. The Budget expenditure necessitated to attain this new minimum wage shows that very numerous workers are reduced to such starvation remuneration. Therefore, if Soviet statistics indicate an average wage of 225 roubles a month in 1936, this can only be due to the disproportionately high pay received by the privileged categories.[1]

From the moment when normalized prices of commodities offered under the supply-card system began their upward movement, the purchasing power of the industrial workers' wages began to fall despite the coincident increase in its nominal value. The decline in the real value of wages dates back to the concluding period of the First Five-Year Plan, when normalized prices registered a considerable advance, which became markedly pronounced in 1933 and 1934. During those two years the price of many commodities rose

1 The average monthly earnings of the technical and clerical *personnel* in large-scale industry are as follows (in roubles):

	1931	*1932*	*1933*	*1934*	*1935*
Technical staff ..	232·3	302·8	340·7	379·4	437·0
Clerical personnel	137·5	173·0	190·2	209·0	234·2
Subordinate personnel	64·7	74·0	82·8	89·0	118·9

(*The Building Up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1936, pp. 524 and 528.)

by 50 per cent, and even 100 per cent, in comparison with their level in 1932, while wages were increased by only 26 per cent.[1]

The burden of the "reform" of 1935, with its "uniform retail prices"—which were much higher than the then abolished "normalized" prices—was particularly felt by working-class budgets. The new price tariffs increased the cost of foodstuffs and other necessaries to such an extent that the 21·2 per cent increase in wages, which had been simultaneously decreed, was far from furnishing even an approximatively sufficient compensation.[2] Practically speaking, the Soviet Government was compelled to go beyond its original intentions, and to carry its rise in wages up to 26½ per cent in the first eight months of 1935. In a report submitted to the Central Executive Committee of the Union, Molotov recognized that the year 1935 showed a considerable excess of expenditure under the heading of wages.[3] It must be noted, however, that the concessions granted have been insignificant when compared with the rise in prices, which went so far as to surpass several times 100 per cent. Nor must it be forgotten that Soviet workers actually receive their full wages only when their monthly output has not been below the standard decreed for their particular category of workers. If it is not, their pay is proportionately reduced.[4]

The reform of 1935 had, however, its positive side. It put an end to the parasitical existence of the industrial workers at the expense of the peasants. Unfortunately, the latter did not obtain any material improvement, while the former certainly lost enormously. This did not prevent Bukharin, the then chief editor of *Izvestia*, from declaring that, since the abolition of the supply-card system, Soviet trade has become "for the most part a social form of exchange . . at the service of the interests of the masses."[5] In reality this "reform"

1 The position of domestic servants is still less enviable than that of the ordinary workers. Pierre Herbart has some very suggestive remarks on this subject. Drawn to Russia by his Communist ideals, he made a prolonged stay there, and published his impressions under the title *In the U.S.S.R.* (Paris, 1936). He says on page 54: "Country girls accept service for something like forty roubles a month, without board, provided they are given lodgings. They sleep in a corner. . . . They eat the remains of food from the plates, boil tea-leaves which have already been used several times, and soak stale bread in this hot water."

2 *The National Economy Plan for 1935*, second edition, p. 641.

3 *Pravda*, January 11, 1936.

4 See on this subject the pamphlet of Kléber Legay (President of the Northern Miners' Syndicate) published in Paris, October 1937, under the title *A French Miner in Russia*. The author gives his personal impressions of the life of the workers in the U.S.S.R., as gathered during a visit to Russia.

5 *Izvestia*, October 12, 1935.

enabled the State to forge an instrument for the ruthless exploitation of the workers. Thanks to monopoly of distribution, the State was able to apply to the industrial workers selling prices exceeding ten, twenty, and even thirty times those at which it bought the same products from the peasants, who were compelled to submit to the Draconian conditions of compulsory deliveries in kind. After having cruelly plundered the peasants, industrialization finished by costing the town workers also terribly dearly.

Reduced to gold values the monthly wages of the workers have fluctuated as follows:

Years	*Gold Roubles*	*Years*	*Gold Roubles*
1913	24·3	1934	32·8
1924–1925	43·5	1935	41·6
1925–1926	54·0	1936	50·6
1926–1927	60·4		

This table indicates that, towards the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, the workers' gold wages, like the real wages, were considerably below their 1925–1927 standard when "the building up of Socialism" had not yet begun. It also shows that the gold wages of the Soviet workers amounted in 1936 to about 208 per cent of their level in 1913. But in 1935 foodstuffs prices, if measured in gold kopecks, had already undergone much greater increases. As we have seen, food prices had gone up by from 261 per cent to 566 per cent in the Moscow area, which may be taken as a typical region.[1] Thus the increased gold wages of the Soviet workman would not allow him to purchase as much goods as the pre-war Russian workman was able to buy. If we express in foodstuffs, at 1913 prices,[2] the monthly wages of the 1913 worker, which amounted then to 24·3 gold roubles, and then similarly translate in foodstuffs at "uniform State prices"[3] the average wages of the worker in May 1937, which were 231 chervonetz roubles,[4] we shall find that in each case the total wages will respectively correspond to the quantities of common necessaries set forth in the comparative table on the next page.[5]

1 See comparative table of Moscow prices in 1913 and in 1935–1936 on page 368.

2 The prices of foodstuffs in 1913 will be found in the table on page 360.

3 The uniform prices of foodstuffs in May 1937 are given in the table printed in note 1, page 363.

4 The average wages for May 1937 are given in note 1, page 369.

5 The computation of the foodstuffs equivalent in 1937 to the average monthly wages has been made on the assumption that the worker was allowed to dispose freely of the whole of his earnings. Now a large part of his money is absorbed by various obligatory deductions and subscriptions. M. Yvon thus enumerates them

	1913 Kilogrammes	1937 Kilogrammes
Rye bread	333	272
Rice	90	35
Butter	21	14
Beef ..	53	30
Crystallized sugar	83	57

It is evident that the mass of workmen and other employees whose wages do not exceed 110–115 roubles per month could not and still cannot purchase more than one-half of the quantities indicated in the second column.

If the question of the real salary is approached from another angle the deductions remain the same. In effect, this problem may also be explored by comparing the figures of the available production of prime necessaries with the growth of the population.

On page 374 will be found the figures referring to the years of the second Five-Year Plan, in comparison with those of 1913.

The last official figure published on the aggregate population of the country is that of January 1, 1933, with 165·7 million inhabitants. Allowance being made for the normal increase of population, as took place in the preceding years, the number of inhabitants should be over 170 millions in 1937 against 139·7 millions in 1913 on the same territory. That is equivalent to over 21 per cent increase of the aggregate population, whereas during the same lapse of time the figure for the workers and employees was increased in the very large proportion of one to two and one-third. On the other hand, the average production of cereals has remained practically at the same level as in 1913, even taking into account the exceptionally good crop of 1937, valued for the nominal crop at 1,115 million quintals and for the really in-gathered crop at 1,003 million quintals.[1]

Most certainly the U.S.S.R. exports less cereals[2] than did pre-

in his already quoted book: "Tax on wages, properly speaking, from 0·67 per cent to 3·3 per cent of the wages; so-called 'cultural' tax from 0·93 per cent to 2·8 per cent; subscription to the co-operative from 1 per cent to 2 per cent; trade union subscription, 2 per cent; subscriptions to State loans, 10 per cent; subscriptions to various societies and funds, 1 per cent. These deductions total from 15 to 21 per cent of the wages and are retained before payment of the latter is made. The worker does not even see this part of his money. These facts can easily be confirmed by checking the pay-rolls of any factory." (Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, Paris, 1936, pp. 26–27.)

1 See page 389.

2 For 257 million chervonetz roubles in 1937.

	1913[1]	*1933*	*1934*	*1935*	*1936*
Aggregate figure of the workmen and employees occupied in national economy in general (in millions)	11·2	23·3	23·7	24·8	25·8
Crop of cereals[2] in millions of quintals[3]					
Nominal	—	898	894	920·1	770
Real	816·0	808	805	828	693
Horned cattle (in millions of units)	60·6	38·4	42·4	49·3	52·4
Of which cows	26·0	19·6	19·5	20·1	21·5
Pigs (millions)	20·9	12·1	17·4	22·5	32·2
Sheep and goats ..	121·2	50·2	51·9	61·1	60·3
Production of textiles—					
In cotton (millions of metres)[4] ..	2,224	2,393	2,438	2,390	2,700
In wool (millions of metres) ..	89·0	83·7	73·7	79·9	97·5
Production of sugar (in millions of tons) ..	1,290	995	1,350	2,000	2,100

war Russia, but this fact would not considerably influence the ratio of the production of cereals as compared to the population in 1937 and in 1913. As for meat and dairy products their output is reduced in comparison with what it was before the War. Their consumption has necessarily declined per head of the population.

If the average of the real working salary of 1937 had corresponded to that of before the War, the consumption of articles of prime necessity by the workmen should have more than doubled, since the aggregate number of workmen and employees represented, in 1936, 230·6 per cent of what it had been in 1913. Now that could have been realized only by effecting a marked decrease in the consumption of the whole rural population of the country. Indeed, any

1 The 1913 figures have been established for the area of the U.S.S.R. and not of pre-war Russia.

2 Since 1933 the nominal crop of cereals is based on the standing crop instead of on its ingathering, as was done heretofore. Therefore the figures given for the real crops have been obtained by reducing by 10 per cent the official nominal output. Further details on this subject, see p. 389.

3 A quintal equals 100 kilogrammes or about two English hundredweight.

4 This refers to manufactured textiles, ready for use, exclusive of the raw textiles; figures established on this basis are the only ones which, under certain reserves, can be compared to those of 1913, a period when published statistics referred only to "manufactured textiles ready for delivery to consumers." The above figures have been taken from the annual statistics, namely: for the year 1933, from *Building Up of Socialism*, 1935, p. 251; for the years 1934–1935, from *Building Up of Socialism*, 1936, p. 195; for the year 1936, from the *Light Industry*, January 3, 1937. There is no discrepancy between the above figures and those, somewhat higher, given on page 405 for cotton fabrics, seeing that these latter comprise the raw products in addition to the manufactured materials.

other solution of the problem would run counter to the brutal fact of the insufficient production of articles of great consumption, industrial as well as agricultural. On the other hand, it is manifestly impossible to make the whole weight of the deficiency fall solely upon the rural population. Since the reform of 1935 has deprived the workmen of their privileged position as regards supplies, they cannot do otherwise than bear their share of this deficiency. Further, the Soviet Government has been obliged to effect a great differentiation in the scale of salaries in order to stimulate the output of labour. The high-salaried personnel has thus been able to rise to a standard of living much superior to that before the War. But the insufficiency of production, together with the increase in the number of consumers, has imposed as an inevitable counterpart a depreciation of the average real salaries of the great mass of the workmen and employees not belonging to the more favoured minority.

It must, therefore, be concluded that, in spite of the slight improvement witnessed since 1935, the standard of living of the workmen and employees has fallen below what it was before the War and during the last years of the *N.E.P.*

Soviet Workmen's Privileges

The reform of 1935 certainly preserved for the Soviet workers two privileges which are denied to the rest of the population. Firstly, the rent which they pay for their dwelling-places is far below the economic value of the premises. Secondly, they enjoy free of charge—or nearly so—certain social services provided by the State, such as medical attendance, transport to and from and sojourns in the "rest houses" (or sanatoria) and health resorts during their annual legal fortnight's holiday, as well as theatre and cinema tickets, etc. The practical value, however, even of privileges as important as very low rents must not be over-estimated. All its financial resources being devoted to the factories, the Government has not been in a position to create housing facilities on an adequate scale. From 1929 to 1932, inclusive, the population of the towns and the large industrial centres has increased from 28,000,000 to 40,000,000. During the same period, however, the superficial area of new housing construction made available has been equivalent to only 22,000,000 square metres. Consequently, the 12,000,000 new

town dwellers have had at their disposal an average of less than two square metres of new floor surface per head.[1]

What foreign workman would envy the petty amount of housing space and the miserable accommodation which "the worker and peasants' Government" provides for its citizens? As a result of personal experience, gathered in the course of eleven years in Russia, M. Yvon furnishes the following facts concerning the workers' housing conditions in the U.S.S.R.: "As a general rule," he says, "from 10 to 20 square metres of space is allotted for a family of two, three, four, or even five persons. Sometimes single rooms are occupied, not by a family, but by several unmarried men, or even by several families. . . . Another type of dwelling-place seen very frequently nowadays takes the form of a large wooden hut, consisting of a single room, containing from 25 to 40 bedsteads, and inhabited by single men. . . . In the workers' dwellings the furniture is more than primitive. There are often insufficient beds for all the members of the household. In many cases winter clothing, spread on the floor, is the only form of bed. . At the Gorki motor-car works . . . 5,000 workmen live in huts. In winter, the water freezes; in summer, the huts teem with bugs. Owing to the absence of drains, the air is polluted. There are also 228 mud-huts. . . ."[2]

The reform of 1935 temporarily maintained supply-cards for

1 During the period of industrialization the floor surface in dwellings did not exceed the following very low figures:

		Floor Surface in square metres	
Years	*Town Population*	*Total*	*Per Head*
1923	21,900,000	127,800,000	5·8
1927–1928	27,900,000	160,000,000	5·7
1932	39,700,000	185,100,000	4·7
1935	43,400,000	203,300,000	4·7

(*The National Economy Plan for 1935*, 2nd edition, p. 533.) The figure of the town population is only a provisional estimate.

2 Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, Paris, 1936, pp. 8, 11, 12.

The Secretary of the Miners' Federation of the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, Kléber Legay, already quoted, is not less critical in his description of housing conditions in U.S.S.R., which appeared in the provincial edition of the newspaper *Populaire*, of Lille, on February 22, 1937: "Numerous little one-storied dwellings have been built," he says, "consisting at the most of three rooms, seldom four. But each room is intended for a whole family. Often there are two families in one room; or eight or nine people per room, without any furniture, except two or three narrow single beds for all. We saw a family of nine persons with only two single beds and no other furniture, not even a chair; an absolute bare dwelling-house."

certain manufactured goods (textiles, shoes, rubber galoshes), but these articles can be bought at the low card prices only irregularly and in small quantities. Practically speaking, such reductions in price represent very little in the workers' budget.

The wretched material situation of the working classes, owing to the inordinately high prices of commodities, is confirmed by official inquiries into proletarian budgets, and particularly in regard to expenditure on food. It is common knowledge that the lower real wages are, the greater is the proportional part of earnings that has to be spent on food. During the *N.E.P.* an inquiry into working-class budgets showed that the cost of food represented about 50 per cent of the total wages. After the abandonment of the *N.E.P.* policy, the percentage spent on food increased rapidly.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF THE AVERAGE WORKMAN'S BUDGET[1]

(In kopecks per month)

	INCOME					
	1930	*1931*	*1932*	*1933*	*1934*	*1935*
Wages of head of family at *pro rata* of persons in family	2,675	3,450	4,149	4,740	5,995	7,637
	EXPENDITURE					
For each member of family:—						
Food ..	1,627	2,142	2,913	3,787	4,004	5,137
Clothes and footwear..	473	538	634	607	799	1,040
Lodging	198	234	238	280	331	386
Cultural needs ..	65	77	79	71	90	121
Hygiene and medical aid	26	24	37	47	62	84
Totals ..	2,389	3,015	3,901	4,792	5,286	6,768
Percentage expenditure on food	60·8%	62·1%	70·2%	79·9%	66·8%	67·3%

This percentage for the cost of food is abnormal. It exceeds the proportion of 50 per cent observed before the Revolution and under the *N.E.P.* régime, and is in itself a proof of the extremely low level of wages.[2]

1 *Labour in the U.S.S.R.*, pp. 342–43. The expenditure budget does not include those expenses for cultural needs, hygiene, and medical aid which are to be borne by the State and paid directly from special funds existing for these purposes.

2 The volume published in 1936, *Social Economy in the U.S.S.R.* (Institute for the Study of Contemporary Russia), p. 8, and diagram No. 26, includes an estimate at present Moscow prices of food expenses, on the basis of the normal working budget set up by the International Labour Office. It arrives at an expenditure of 114 roubles 80 kopecks per person and per month, or nearly 230 roubles for a family of two. According to the same work, average wages amount in the U.S.S.R. to 210 roubles. Even this rate, which many do not reach, is insufficient for the subsistence of two people on the basis indicated. It is therefore reasonable to affirm

The fact—a very characteristic one—that the number of members of a workman's family is diminishing, as well as the number of persons (children, old people, invalids) supported by each of the wage earners, points to the same conclusion.

COMPOSITION OF A WORKMAN'S FAMILY[1]

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Number of heads (average)	4·02	3·96	3·93	3·87	3·83	3·80
Number of wage earners (average) ..	1·32	1·45	1·44	1·44	1·44	1·47
Number of persons supported in each family (average)	2·70	2·51	2·49	2·43	2·39	2·33
Number of persons supported per each wage earner (average)	2·05	1·73	1·73	1·69	1·66	1·59

Social Insurance in the U.S.S.R.

Despite the rather high total amount taken by the Soviet State for purposes of social insurance, this means of assistance—owing to the way in which it is organized—can do but little to improve the lot of the workers.

Every factory manager or head of an undertaking is required to disburse, in addition to the total of the wages paid, a further amount, representing about 30 per cent of this total, and to pay this amount to the Treasury for purposes of social insurance. The State Bank distributes the sums thus received among the various relief institutions concerned. "The total wages in the U.S.S.R. being estimated at 40,000 million roubles"[2] the said 30 per cent contribution yields the substantial sum of some 12,000 millions. Nevertheless, the expenditure item, "For Social and Cultural Purposes," does not exceed in the Soviet Budgets 6,500 million roubles! Thus, the State utilizes for other purposes nearly one-half of the money paid to the Treasury for the needs of social insurance!

In 1935 5,902,300,000 roubles were entered under the heading

that the standarcd of nutrition of the average Soviet worker is below the standard of the International Labour Office.

The direct help which the Soviet Government gives to the workers by organizing their meals at the factories is hardly satisfactory from the point of view of either the quality or the quantity of food. The workman—alone, without his family, and of course only once a day and on working days—can obtain at the price of about a rouble either a plateful of soup, or a dish of cabbage and potatoes, with a small quantity of fat or meat considered sufficient to maintain his strength.

1 *Labour in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 342.

2 Estimate for 1935, given by Zhdanov, *Pravda*, December 26, 1934.

of "Social Insurance."[1] This total sum was divided into three principal portions. The first—2,017,340,000 roubles—was distributed for sickness and accident relief, payment of holiday expenses, pensions, etc. As a rule the amount of allowances under this heading is not entirely determined by the degree of sickness, incapacity, or old age. It is the social worth of the worker which counts above all else. The *stakhanovists*, "shock-workers," and holders of decorations alone can claim, in case of illness, regular allowances equal to their customary earnings.[2] The others receive no more than a half or two-thirds of their usual earnings, provided, however, they are certified by the factory doctor as sufficiently ill. By missing a single day's work without a sick-leave certificate delivered by the doctor, any worker runs the risk of being declared to be a "labour deserter" and suffering all the consequences of this.[3] Now that it has definitely abandoned its so-called equalitarian principles, the Soviet Government has abrogated the rule under which, in cases of illness, a monthly allowance could in no case exceed 300 roubles. The inequality now existing in the wages applies nowadays to the whole field of social insurance.

The Soviet Government freely describes the 12 days paid holiday allowed to the workers as one of the "conquests" of the Bolshevik Revolution. In reality, the cost this right involves is more than recouped by the workers' subscriptions to the State loans, which, in fact, are compulsory and equivalent to a cash sacrifice by each worker of from 15 to 30 days' wages. The Frenchman, Yvon, who worked in the U.S.S.R. for eleven years, affirms from his personal experience that the average Soviet worker is often compelled to seek work during his holiday period. "The constant life of semi-poverty," he says, "drives the head of the family to beg for permission to work during his holidays, in order to double his earnings at least once a year; but as a permission to do this involves getting round a very strict law such 'blessings' are seldom granted."[4]

1 *Izvestia*, June 9, 1936.

2 The law gives the worker the right, in case of sickness, to receive an allowance equal to 100 per cent of his earnings, only if he has worked in a given factory for not less than two years.

3 Even in the mining, where the work is particularly irksome, the workers cannot rely on receiving a sickness allowance equal to their full wages unless they furnish a proof that during the last two months preceding their illness their output has been up to the required standard.

4 Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, Paris, 1936, p. 30.

The pensions paid to workers in the U.S.S.R., in the case of their having lost their capacity to work, have little attraction. Such pensions usually amount to from 25 to 50 roubles per month.[1] It rarely reaches 70 or 80 roubles. With wages of 150–200 roubles a month the worker is condemned to an existence which borders on misery. It is easily understood that he contemplates with real terror the date when he will be obliged to retire on his scanty pension. Even at the age of seventy, many Russian workmen strive to be allowed to continue working in the factories. But if the Soviet Government unblushingly pay a pittance of 35 roubles a month to workmen who have spent fifty years of their lives in front of their machines, it readily grants to its dignitaries, prominent party members, directors of large enterprises, responsible specialists, etc., monthly pensions of from 300 to 1,500 roubles, with the additional advantage of the lifelong use of a roomy and comfortable flat.

Such is the manner in which the first two milliards destined for social insurance are spent in the U.S.S.R.

The second portion of expenditure under the heading of "Social and Cultural Purposes" requires a strong effort of goodwill to bring it into the domain of social insurance. It comprises part of the expenditure on education, kindergartens, scholarships, housing, public parks, stadiums, etc. In 1935, 1,720,050,000 roubles were allocated to this branch of social insurance. At a stretch, it may perhaps be admitted that crèches, kindergartens, parks, stadiums, etc., which the representatives of the Soviet Government are fond of treating as supplements to wages, form part of social insurance. No one can deny, however, that the majority of modern bourgeois States ensure all these services at least as well as the U.S.S.R. does.[2]

The last portion of the sum expended on social insurance is devoted to hospitals, medicaments, medical attendance, convalescent homes, sanatoria, hydropathic and seaside resorts. In 1935, the sum of 2,164,910,000 roubles was devoted to these items, and distributed in the same discriminating manner as the Soviet pensions, etc.,

1 What this sum represents can be inferred from the fact that nowadays the rouble possesses a purchasing power of no more—and even rather less—than threepence or six United States cents. See pages 383 and 386.

2 In the U.S.S.R. "social insurance" does not provide free books and stationery for elementary school children. In Moscow, for instance, the pupils in those schools have to pay sometimes as much as 24 roubles a year for various scholastic supplies, whereas they actually receive not more than 3 roubles worth. In pre-revolutionary Russia elementary school children received free of charge all necessary supplies.

already referred to. The solicitudes of the Soviet Government and the greater part of its expenditure do not go to the mass of the Russian working classes, but to the privileged few of the Soviet community. The authorities themselves admit that their social medical service leaves much to be desired. Kaminsky, the People's Commissar for Public Health, agreed that, early in 1936, there were in Moscow only 6·3 hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants.[1] At the same period, also in Moscow, there were 5,000 rachitic children in need of hospital treatment, but the number of beds available for these little sufferers in the whole of the Moscow hospitals was only 65.[2] The Soviet dignitaries themselves could, of course, be sure of finding during this period all the medical attention their health demanded.

The difference of treatment enjoyed respectively by the "notable" and the ordinary invalid is also to be observed in the spas, the sanatoria, convalescent homes, and seaside resorts. The sanatoria and convalescent homes destined for workers invariably present the appearance of military barracks, even when they are installed in former Imperial palaces. The patients and convalescents residing there are subjected to constant supervision and strict discipline. Their day is passed according to a carefully drawn up schedule. As far as their physical condition allows, they have to undergo compulsory military training, and to attend numerous conferences and other gatherings organized for purposes of political propaganda. They are lodged in dormitories often accommodating 30 or 40 persons. And it is often in immediate proximity to such unenticing establishments that sanatoria reserved for the privileged class are situated. Here, on the contrary, everyone has a private room, if not a small house, entirely for his personal use. Here the food is excellent and varied, and the servants are silent-footed. One spends one's time as one chooses, and the tiresome and accursed political propaganda leaves one in peace. These sanatoria, rest homes, and resorts for the privileged minority absorb by far the greater part of the 2,000,000,000 roubles allocated for the workers' social insurance under the heading of medical aid.[3]

1 In 1913 the hospitals of Moscow possessed 7·4 beds per thousand inhabitants.

2 *Izvestia*, February 6 and 28, 1936.

3 *Izvestia* of February 1, 1935, published figures relative to the number of "toilers" admitted, in 1934, into various sanatoria, convalescent homes, etc. These showed that out of the 3,000,000 inhabitants of Moscow, 2,000 benefited (free of charge or at reduced prices) from seaside and hydropathic resorts; 7,000

Thus, in the U.S.S.R., social insurance can alleviate the plight of the workers only to an insignificant extent. Its chief advantages are reserved for those who anyhow lead an incomparably easier and more "cheerful" life than the rank and file workers. In the U.S.S.R., social insurance is a veritable charity, which the all-powerful Government condescends to distribute occasionally among those whom ordinarily it exploits without mercy.

Plight of Soviet Workers Compared to that of European Workers. The Real Wages and the Purchasing Power of the Rouble

If the standard of living of the Soviet worker, at the period of Stalin's industrialization, was considerably lowered, even in relation with what it had been under the *N.E.P.*, how wretched it is in comparison with the conditions of existence among the Western European and American working classes.

In 1936, several books dealing with Soviet Russia appeared in Europe and America, which had been written by foreigners who had visited the country not merely as tourists, but who had gone there as experienced technical experts or students, or had mixed very closely with the everyday working life of the country. Their deductions are based not on the study of long columns of figures, but on personal experience, often prolonged and unpleasant. The value of such observations becomes especially striking when the various authors arrive at identical conclusions, although they lived in localities far removed from one another and have never met.

The most marked resemblance between these different books is their common recognition of the extreme dearness of living in the

from sanatoria; 50,000 from a convalescent home in the immediate surroundings of Moscow. As to the latter category of convalescent homes intended for ordinary workers, M. Yvon says: "Besides discipline, they are the abode of hunger, cockroaches and bugs." For the proper understanding of the figures furnished by *Izvestia*, it must be borne in mind that the term of "toilers" applies as much to the ordinary workers as to the technical personnel and managers of factories. "A simple visit to the hydropathic and seaside resorts and convalescent homes shows that the more comfortable the accommodation the larger is the proportion of responsible officials and technicians—from zero in the rest barracks of the third category . . . it reaches nearly 100 per cent at the fashionable seaside resorts and spas." (Yvon, *Ce qu'est devenue la révolution russe*, pp. 37 and 39.) On the other hand, the American workman, Andrew Smith, who is very well informed about conditions in the U.S.S.R., gives in his book a striking picture of the almost criminal neglect with which ordinary patients are treated in the Soviet sanatoria. (Andrew Smith, *I was a Soviet Worker*, New York and London, 1936, pp. 214–226.)

U.S.S.R., and the very low standard of comfort which, for the Russian worker, is the direct consequence of that fact.[1] M. Ernest Mercier, the great French industrialist, who visited Russia in the autumn of 1935, expresses himself as follows on the subject of this dearness: "Judging by the prices displayed in the retail shops in Moscow, and limiting ourselves to foodstuffs and the most used commodities, the value of the rouble on the Russian market at that time would barely exceed 75 centimes."[2]

It is possible that this parity of the rouble—75 centimes in "Poincaré" francs—may not be quite exact. The purchasing power of the rouble varies according to the commodities to which the worker can limit his expenses. But M. Mercier's estimate is corroborated by an abundant observation of facts and it is impossible not to admit its practical value. The realities of everyday life no doubt justify another statement of the same author to the effect that the purchasing power of the average wage of a Russian worker is lower than that of the unemployment allowance paid in France. In a general way, M. Mercier's book contains many bitter references to the plight

1 It is sufficient to select a few largely used manufactured articles and compare their prices in France—where the cost of living, as is well known, is far from cheap—with the corresponding prices in the U.S.S.R., in order to realize how much harder is the plight of the Soviet worker as compared with that of his Western comrades, especially if due consideration is given to the lower pay of Russian wage earners, which, as we have seen, averaged in 1936 225 roubles, and sometimes did not exceed 110 to 115 roubles per month. Such comparisons will at the same time show how artificial is the official quotation of the rouble as compared to its internal purchasing power. The prices under review for this purpose relate to the spring of 1937, when the rouble was legally valued in Auriol francs at 4 francs 25 centimes. The French prices are of course given in these same Auriol francs, which were then current in France, and equivalent to 105 francs to the pound and 21 francs to the dollar.

In Moscow, leather boots for men cost 300 roubles a pair, which corresponds (taking the rouble at 4 francs 25 cts.) to 1,275 francs; whereas in Paris an article of the same quality costs from 80 to 100 francs, or at most one-twelfth of the Moscow price. A metre of cotton cloth costs, in Moscow, at least 6 roubles, or 25 francs; in Paris, from 3 francs 50 cts. to 4 francs, or seven times cheaper. In Moscow, woollen fabrics cost at least 50 roubles a metre or 212 francs; their price in Paris is from 12 to 16 francs. Ladies' thread stockings, costing in Moscow 35 roubles, or 149 francs, are sold in Paris at 12 or 14 francs a pair. Similarly, all articles of food are more expensive in the U.S.S.R. than in France. This is the case even with tea, that Russian "national beverage," once so much used by the Russian masses. A kilogramme of very ordinary tea, of local (that is, Georgian) origin, costs 80 roubles or 350 francs. In France, tea of similar quality, from Indo-China, costs 37 francs or nine times less.

2 *U.S.S.R. Reflexions*, by Ernest Mercier, Paris, 1936, p. 39. At the time of M. Mercier's trip to Russia, 75 French (Poincaré) centimes equalled at the rate of exchange about 2½d. or 5 United States cents. (Compare p. 386.)

of the Soviet worker. "It is sufficient," he says, "to see manual workers, especially in certain categories, and in particular the porters at some of the railway stations, away from the big centres, in order to be struck and disconcerted by the dull despair displayed on their pale faces." One of the principal conclusions of M. Mercier's book is summed up in the following words: "It is evident that one of the chief dangers to the Soviet régime lies in the difficult situation of the working population, eighteen years after the outbreak of the Revolution . . . and this preoccupation will induce the Government . to establish round Russia an absolute barrier in order to prevent the penetration from outside of any information concerning the social conditions of the workers in the various other countries."[1]

The conclusions of Ernest Mercier are nearly identical with those of another foreign observer, M. René Grosclaude, Swiss engineer, who was employed from 1933 to 1936 in an oil distillery at Tuapcé, in the Caucasus. "Life is not easy for the Russian workers," he writes, "with their average monthly earnings of 200 roubles. What can they buy? Alas! their factory co-operative store supplies them with 300 grammes (about eleven ounces) of bread per day, and 50 grammes (about two ounces) of sugar every two months. They have to buy the rest of their requirements in the free market, by paying 32 roubles for a kilogramme of butter, 12 roubles for meat, 2·50 roubles for a litre of milk. The 200 roubles are soon exhausted. To buy a suit of clothes, 400 roubles is needed, which represents the

1 Ernest Mercier, *U.S.S.R.*, Paris, 1936, pp. 58 and 42. Another passage from this book says: "It must not be forgotten that hundreds of thousands of workers live in Moscow, sometimes five crowded in a single room, and that the Government has announced that it will take ten years to solve the housing problem in this city" (p. 52).

The observations of the French industrialist are confirmed, in large measure, by the conclusions of M. Kléber Legay, Secretary of the French Miners' Federation of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais departments: "In order that the Russian miner may have the same purchasing power as the French miner, he must earn as many roubles as the French miner receives in francs. . . . It is to be wondered how the men and women, who earn seven or five roubles a day respectively, and those who, with families to keep, receive only ten to twelve roubles a day (for there are no extra allowances for children), can manage to exist." (The Lille edition of the Socialist daily newspaper *Le Populaire*, February 22, 1937.)

In the previously quoted booklet (p. 36) Kléber Legay gives the following prices of clothing as ruling during his stay in the U.S.S.R. in the autumn of 1936: "Men's shoes, with rubber soles, 290 roubles; women's, 280 roubles; men's overcoats, average quality, 350 roubles; boy's suit (8 to 10 years), 288 roubles." Workers earning only 110 to 115 roubles a month have to pay away about one-quarter of their earnings for a whole year to obtain any one of these articles.

pay for 60 days' work; for a pair of shoes, 150 roubles, or 22 days; for an overcoat, 250 roubles, or 37 days . . . A few months later, going back to Switzerland, I again saw, in passing through the customs at Negoreloie, the map with its multicoloured dots (indicating the achievements of the Soviet régime). I know now those magnificent factories. I know what those astounding statistics are worth. I have seen how the 'freest workers in the world' are kept under surveillance. I understood why the country was surrounded with barbed wire, and why no Russian worker is allowed, under any pretext, to leave his country. . . In Europe there are many unemployed, but everybody has something to eat, while in Russia everybody works but they all go hungry."[1]

The opinions of the French industrialist, Ernest Mercier, and of the eminent Swiss engineer, René Grosclaude, differ in no way from the observations of the American, Andrew Smith, a genuine workman and member of the American Communist Party, who went to the U.S.S.R. full of enthusiasm.

Working at his trade in Moscow, Andrew Smith learnt to know the reverse side of sovietic life. For this reason, his account of the U.S.S.R. cannot be contradicted in any way by the superficial impressions of some eminent tourist. According to the picture painted by Andrew Smith, there are 11,000 men working at the Electro-Works in Moscow. They are distributed, in groups of 500 people, among wooden huts, where they sleep on mattresses and bags stuffed with straw or dry leaves. They have neither blankets nor pillows. In order to sleep they cover themselves with the clothes they have just taken off. There are no lavatories and the workers wash under pumps in the courtyards. The wages vary from 100 to 150 roubles a month or 3 dollars to 5 dollars (in purchasing power). With this pittance they must feed themselves, while meat of the cheapest quality costs three roubles a kilogram. A pair of the cheapest shoes is priced at 55 roubles, or half the monthly earnings. Moreover, the wages are never paid in full. The State tax (10 per cent), the cultural tax (2 per cent), the trade-union subscription and compulsory payments to different national and social organizations are always deducted on pay-day. After having worked for several years in a Moscow factory, Andrew Smith not only tore up his Communist Party membership card, but on his return to America

1 René Grosclaude's impressions of the U.S.S.R. appeared in the *Journal de Genève* for November 3, 4 and 7, 1936.

he hastened to warn his compatriots of the troubles awaiting those who went to the U.S.S.R. in search of work. "Even the unemployed," writes Mr. Andrew Smith, "live better in the United States than the workers do in the Soviet Union. The Russian people would be happy to eat the bread that the American workers, and even the unemployed, throw into the garbage pail."[1]

With these judgments of a French industrialist, a Swiss engineer, and an American worker, it is interesting to compare the conclusions of a man so exceptionally competent in labour questions as Sir Walter Citrine, the General Secretary of the British Trade Unions.

According to Citrine, the monthly wages of an average Soviet worker vary between 190 roubles (Skorokhod shoe factory) and 250 roubles (Kirov Engineering Works, the former Poutiloff works in St. Petersburg). In the autumn of 1935, when Citrine visited Russia, he estimated that the purchasing power of the rouble was equal to 1/80th of the pound sterling (3d., or six American cents). This estimate seemed to him rather to favour the rouble than otherwise.[2] The advantages which the workers enjoy in the form of free medical attention, sanatoria, transport to health resorts, as well as of paid holidays, low rents, education of the children, pensions, etc., he estimated as representing, at the best, an additional value equal to one-third of the wages paid in cash. According to Sir Walter Citrine, the average monetary wage in the boot and shoe industry was equivalent to 15s. 10d. (or $3.20) a week, and that for metallurgical workers 20s. 10d. (or $4.20). He increased these figures by one-third to include the above-mentioned privileges received in addition to the monetary wages. On this basis the average weekly wage worked out at only 21s. 1½d. (or $4.27) at the lowest, and at 27s. 9½d. (or $5.69) at the best.[3]

1 Andrew Smith, *I was a Soviet Worker*, New York, Dutton, 1936, pp. 257 and 258. Impressions similar to those of Smith were brought back by five Austrian workmen drawn to U.S.S.R. by their faith in Socialism. (See *Zweimal auf der Flucht*, Arbeiterpresse, Vienna, 1936.)

2 Sir Walter Citrine's estimate coincides with that of Mr. Mercier (see above, page 383) and of many other observers. The interior purchasing power of the rouble has practically not changed since the two persons mentioned visited the U.S.S.R. As to the official quotation of the rouble in Moscow, it was on January 1, 1937, 24·74 roubles for one pound or about 5 roubles for one U.S.A. dollar.

3 Walter Citrine, *I Search for Truth in Russia*, London, 1936, pp. 334 and 335.

Standard of Comfort of the Working Masses

Thus all the arguments which could be adduced to demonstrate the success of the Communist economic system are eclipsed by the fundamental fact that the wage level of the Russian workers is extremely low.

It is, of course, possible to cite the example of the *stakhanovists*, referred to above—that is of the imitators of the now henceforward celebrated Donetz Basin miner, Stakhanov—whose output is much above the general average, and whose earnings are incomparably higher than those of their comrades, owing to a system of piecework payment on a progressive scale.[1] In 1935 their earnings reached as high as 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 roubles a month, with a minimum of 700 to 800 roubles. In 1936 they rose still further, attaining sometimes 2,200, 2,600, 3,500, 3,700, and even 4,500 roubles a month.[2] These workers are naturally in a position to live comfortably,[3] but they are in a very small minority. It would be just as fallacious to judge the economic state of the country and the extent of the satisfaction of the people's wants by the material situation of the *stakhanovists*, as it would be to draw general conclusions as to the common standard of living in Russia from the level of welfare and luxury enjoyed by the high officials of the Political Police (the former *Oguepeu*).[4]

In point of fact, the bulk of the working class, whose low standard of living has just been described, constitutes a very important percentage of the Russian population. As a result of the industrialization of the country, the U.S.S.R. has nowadays about 25,000,000 wage

1 The essence of this system is as follows: a daily standard output is fixed (in metres, tons, or pieces, as the case may be), and a scale of payment per unit is also established. The multiplication of these two factors gives the normal amount of wages. As soon as the output exceeds the standard, the price per unit produced is increased and sometimes even to a considerable ratio. Thus, in the coal industry, if the standard output is surpassed by 10 per cent, the remuneration per unit is doubled; if it is exceeded by more than 10 per cent, it is trebled.

2 "Earnings of the *Stakhanovists*" (*For Industrialisation*, November 15, 16, and 17, 1935, and May 1, 9, and 14, 1936).

3 During the *stakhanovist* conference held in Moscow in November 1935 some very interesting information was supplied with regard to the sum which these highly paid workers spend on their clothing and footwear. One working woman said that she had bought for herself a pair of shoes at 180 roubles, a costume at 200 roubles, and a coat for 700 roubles. (*For Industrialisation*, November 15, 1935.) It is certain that the same articles would have cost a Western fellow-worker much less.

4 Andrew Smith's already quoted book contains a graphic description of the luxurious life led by the officials of the *Oguepeu* (pp. 50–51).

earners, to whom must be added the children and old people depending on them. Even so convinced a Communist as Victor Serge (V. S. Kibalchich) has been led to conclude categorically, as a result of his many and numerous observations of Russian life, that the average worker lived much better in Russia before the Revolution than under Stalin's Socialism.[1]

Kolkhozian Peasants' Standard of Living. Grain Crops

It is unfortunately impossible to translate into figures the standard of living of the peasants who form the basis of the Russian people. On the whole they still live chiefly on what they themselves produce. It is possible, however, to arrive at a fairly accurate estimate of the amount of grain which each peasant commands for his personal needs under the Soviet economic system. As in the past, bread is still the staple food of the Russian people. In any case, it is certain that in the event of a lack of bread, it is usually difficult to replace it by other foodstuffs, as these are not available in sufficient quantities. The population is then doomed to starve.

According to Soviet statistics, the Russian grain harvests have

1 "Did one live better before the Revolution? People of about forty are unanimous in asserting that one did from the triple point of view of food, clothing, and housing. . . . I have more than once heard mothers deplore the fact that their children had not known the good times when, on the occasion of religious holidays, such excellent things were provided as pastry, jam, cream." (Victor Serge, *Destin d'une révolution*, Paris, 1937, p. 17.)

In the U.S.S.R. the standard of living of an average intellectual does not seem to be much better than that of the average worker, especially if account is taken of the cultural needs which are greater in the case of the former. The *Bulletin de la Société Française d'électrothérapie et de radiologie* published in its issue for October 1936 an article by Dr. Denier, who spent a month in the Soviet Union studying the organization of the medical services. He praises the material conditions in which scientific work is carried on in the "Institutes of Experimental Medicine," but adds that a sharp line must be drawn between the situation of the doctors engaged in scientific research and the general practitioners. "The normal salary of a doctor does not amount to more than 400 roubles, which is not enough to live on, and therefore he usually fulfils two or three functions. . . . He lives with his family in one room, which has to serve as dining-room, bedroom, library, kitchen, etc. What our Russian colleague suffers from most is the suppression of individualism. Life obliges them to conform to everyone's way of thinking. Everything is shared—his material existence, his intellectual life. He has nothing to feed upon but official newspapers, official literature, and a small number of professional books. How can he subscribe to foreign reviews or buy foreign books when the rouble has no value outside the U.S.S.R.? He cannot go to congresses abroad, because it is forbidden to leave the country. . . . The material conditions are hard for our Russian fellow-doctors, but it is the moral constraint which is most odious." (See pp. 368, 369, etc., of the *Bulletin* above mentioned, also *Izvestia* of April 24, 1938, regarding doctors' salaries.)

attained the following nominal quantities in million quintals of 100 kilograms or two English hundredweights:

1913	801·0	1933	898·0
1928	733·2	1934	894·0
1929	717·4	1935	920·1
1930	835·4	1936 (Plan)	1,047·6
1931	694·8	1937[1]	1,115·0
1932	698·7		

It must be noted that the official figures of crops issued by the Central State Commission responsible for such returns do not refer to the quantities of grain actually ingathered, but to the standing crops reduced by only 10 per cent to allow for inevitable losses.[2] All who have studied the problem, including Soviet agronomists and economists, agree that the losses on the crops in the U.S.S.R. must be estimated on the average at 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the standing crop.[3] Therefore, at least another 10 per cent must be deducted from the official figures of the crops since 1933, in order to determine the supply of grain actually available for consumption and sowing. Consequently, the real ingathered harvest cannot be estimated at more than 808 million quintals for 1933, 805 million for 1934, and 828 million for 1935. In the same way the official figure for the 1937 crop must be reduced to 1,003 million quintals. As to 1936 the only available official figures are those of the Plan, but none have yet been published as to the actual results of that year's harvest. It is none the less possible to form a fairly accurate idea on this point, making use of other information procurable. The Soviet review, *Economic Problems,* in No. 2, for 1937, page 99, published the official figures of the period yield per hectare during the period 1931–1936. This has furnished Professor Prokopovich's Economic Cabinet in Prague with a basis on which to calculate the total of cereals for 1936. The latter in his estimate did not exceed 770,000,000 quintals. As explained above, after deducting 10 per cent for losses, the quantity actually stored amounted to some 693,000,000 quintals.[4]

1 Or 6·8 million poods, this being a preliminary estimate. See *Twenty Years of Soviet Power.* A collection of statistics. Moscow, 1937, p. 52.

2 See Osinsky's article in *Izvestia,* January 9, 1934.

3 For instance, *The Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture,* 1935, No. 12, p. 64, recognizes that losses of grain in the *kolkhozes* generally exceed 20 per cent.

4 *Bulletin of the Economic Cabinet* of Professor Prokopovich in Prague, No. 136, June 1937. The ingathered harvest for 1936 thus was lower than those of 1931–1932, which were, however, years marked by famine. In 1936 the hectare produced only 6·7 quintals as compared with 8 quintals in 1913.

The population of the U.S.S.R. totalled in 1936 about 170,000,000. The 1935 harvest, although better than those of previous years, yielded 5·4 quintals of grain per head, as compared with 6·3 quintals during each of the five years immediately preceding the Revolution. During the years before 1917 the quantity of grain per head of the population was therefore about 16 per cent greater than in 1936. It is notorious, however, that already at that time the amount of grain available for the peasant's own use was reduced to an amount which resulted in quite a low standard of living.

This average quantity of 5·4 quintals per annum and per head is, however, far from representing the actual supply of grain really found in the peasant's granary. It is merely the arithmetical quota obtained by dividing the total harvest by the number of the country's total population. But that figure is far from giving an idea as to how much grain is left for the peasant's consumption.

It has been mentioned that the ingathered harvest for 1935 amounted to, at most, 828,000,000 quintals. A large part of this —estimated at 249,000,000 quintals—is requisitioned by the Soviet Government, in the form of deliveries in kind.[1] Besides the low standard of the agricultural methods prevailing in Russia necessitates at least 125 quintals of grain per hectare for sowing purposes, which calls for a further deduction of about 130,000,000 quintals. Now if we deduct these two quantities from the above total of 828,000,000 quintals, the total quantity available for consumption cannot be more than approximately 449,000,000 quintals. The peasants constituting to-day slightly less than 75 per cent of the total population, they certainly numbered in 1936 not less than 120,000,000.[2] Therefore the amount of cereals available for the rural population works out at only 3·7 quintals per head and per annum, which must suffice not only for the nutrition of the human peasant community, but also for the live stock. This computation cannot be said to be underestimated; on the contrary, authoritative Soviet figures lead to the conclusion that the peasants are still worse off, as regards food supplies, than the foregoing data suggest.

1 *Agriculture in the U.S.S.R.*, 1935, pp. 213 and 215. The estimate of 249,000,000 is by no means exaggerated considering that according to other sources (*The Plan*, No. 12) the deliveries in kind to the Government amounted, even in 1934, to 263,000,000 quintals.

2 According to the *U.S.S.R. Handbook* (London, 1936, p. 55), the rural population formed in 1933 75·7 per cent of the total. Compare with the figures given on page 288, note 2, which should be augmented by the yearly increase of population.

Statistics for the entire U.S.S.R. show that the following annual amounts of grain were actually paid by way of "labour-day" remuneration (in quintals).[1]

	per Household	*per Head*
1932	5·5	1·15
1933	9·8	2·04
1934	10·9	2·27

The average distribution per head has been calculated by us on the basis of the peasant family consisting of 4·8 persons.[2] It must be noted that the *kolkhozian* peasants draw nearly all their grain from the *kolkhozes* as they grow scarcely any on their "plots for private use." Although the distribution by the *kolkhozes* of grain has lately almost doubled, it does not suffice to fulfil the needs of the peasants. Indeed, the minimum food ration in Russia has always been normally estimated at 2·5 quintals of grain per head. Besides, from the meagre quantities of grain distributed by the *kolkhozes* the needs of the peasant's live stock have also to be met. As a consequence the under-feeding of the *kolkhozian* families, throughout the industrialization period, was a constant feature.

In *Pravda* for May 8, 1936, the Soviet Academician, Strumilin, stated that "the average monthly consumption of the principal agricultural products in 1935 was as follows: bread and cereals, 21·8 kilograms; potatoes, 15·9 kilograms; milk and dairy produce, 4·07 kilograms." This gives the following annual quantities: cereals, 261·6 kilograms; potatoes, 190·8 kilograms; milk and dairy produce, 48·84 kilograms. Strumilin seemed to be quite satisfied with these figures, and declared that in the U.S.S.R. the "toilers" consume so much bread per day that "the workers in the Fascist countries would no doubt envy them." Such a statement is made possible only by the fact that Soviet readers have no idea what the Western European workers and peasants eat, and are especially ignorant of the fact that the latter not only consume greater quantities of the products enumerated, but also other foodstuffs, including meat, which is practically out of the reach of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. Strumilin's figures prove—and this is their chief interest—that the food of the masses was much more plentiful before

1 Altaisky and others. *Financial Management of the Kolkhozes*, Moscow, 1937, p. 136. *Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture*, 1938, No. 1, states that in the Kuban, the richest agricultural section of the U.S.S.R., 45 per cent of all the *kolkhozes* investigated have distributed for labour days in 1936 only 244 kilograms of grain and 17·8 kilograms of potatoes and vegetables per head, and that from 40 to 45 per cent of the crops in the same year have been set aside in this region for the State.

2 See p. 288, footnote 2.

the Revolution than it is now. To avoid all suspicion of bias on this matter, we cannot do better than compare Strumilin's figures with those which Lenin himself published in 1899 in his book on *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (p. 126). He there stated that in 1892, under the Tsarist régime, a wage-earning agricultural labourer consumed, in the province of Saratov, an annual average of 419·3 kilograms of cereals, plus 13·3 kilograms of animal fats.

Strumilin's statistics are also interesting for another reason. They make it perfectly clear that, prior to the compulsory collectivization of the rural districts, the Russian peasant was much better fed than he is to-day, in spite of all Stalin's declarations as to the care to be given to the "human *cadres*." It is particularly revealing, from this point of view, to compare the figures for the 1935 crop, amounting to 920,000,000 quintals, with those for 1928, when the harvest was very bad and the wheat crop did not exceed 733,000,000 quintals. According to the periodical *Planned Economy*,[1] the following quantities of foodstuffs were consumed per head of the population in the U.S.S.R. between October 1927 and October 1928: cereals, 298·8 kilograms; potatoes, 149·76 kilograms, milk (exclusive of other dairy products), 111·36 kilograms. Thus, at the close of the Second Five-Year Plan, the supply of bread and milk to the mass of the population was smaller than it had been before the forcible collectivization of farming in such a hard year as 1928–1929 when food supplies were particularly scarce.[2] All these facts tend to justify the fundamental conclusion that, since the agrarian revolution and the collectivization, cereals, which form the basis of his food, are assured to the peasant in quantities not exceeding the minimum strictly necessary for his existence.

As regards the cash payments which the *kolkhozian* peasants receive from the *kolkhoze* administration, in addition to payments in kind, these are quite insignificant, even by comparison with the latter. In 1936, according to *Pravda*, "the average . of the cash

1 *Planned Economy*, 1932, No. 3, p. 145.

2 At first sight one cannot very well understand how the average consumption of bread per head in 1928–1929, with its indifferent crop of 733,000,000 quintals, could have been larger than in 1935, with the latter's ingathered harvest of 828,000,000 quintals. The explanation is that the population of the U.S.S.R. had increased, during those seven years, by about 15 per cent; so that, in order to maintain consumption at the 1928–1929 level, an ingathered crop of 843,000,000 quintals would have been needed in 1935. As regards the consumption of milk, the decrease more or less corresponds to the reduction of live stock. By comparison with 1928–1929 the consumption of potatoes alone showed an increase in 1935.

payments distributed by the *kolkhozes* among their members barely reached 10 per cent of the total cash profits obtained by the *kolkhozian* peasants."[1] Thus, it is chiefly the income which they secured from their tiny individualistic farming units which enable the *kolkhozian* peasants to satisfy their needs in manufactured articles. This state of things is fully recognized by the Soviet Press itself.[2]

The Live Stock

The fact that the *kolkhozian* peasants receive insufficient quantities of grain is all the more serious since, as already stated, collectivization resulted in a disastrous decrease in live stock, which has always been the principal form of movable capital in rural Russia.

The country is only beginning to recover from that appalling hecatomb. The Russian village still has many fewer heads of live stock than at the period of the *N.E.P.* or before the Revolution. This explains why the supplies of the population, even of that of the countryside, in products of animal origin, are to-day 30 to 50 per cent less than at that time.

Stock-breeding is again beginning to develop on the peasant farms, and in this connection a great role is reserved for the individualistic initiative of the *kolkhozian* peasants on their "plots for private use." The distribution of cows and pigs among the different types of farms is worth noting.[3]

1 *Pravda*, April 19, 1937. Altaisky, *Financial Management of the Kolkhozes* (Moscow, 1937, p. 141) furnishes for 1935 data as to cash payments made to *kolkhozian* peasants for labour days in respect of seven typical districts. The resulting average for each *kolkhozian* household works out for that year at 307 roubles, 70 kopecks being paid for every labour day. This disbursement represented on an average 44 per cent of the total monetary income of the *kolkhozes*. The practice of diverting the monetary incomes of the *kolkhozes* for different expenses for capital, operating and administration, had taken such proportions that the Council of People's Commissars ordered, on April 19, 1938, that not less than from 60 to 70 per cent of the monetary income of the *kolkhoze* should, henceforward, be shared amongst its members in the proportion of the labour days due to them. (*Izvestia*, April 20, 1938.) According to *Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture*, 1938, No. 1, the monetary remuneration per labour day in 1936 did not reach 1 rouble in the Kuban, the richest agricultural region of the U.S.S.R.

2 "In a number of *kolkhozes* the share paid out in cash for 'labour days' was still very small in 1936. Therefore the sale of the produce derived from the plots for private use—more especially from their personal live stock—has been an essential source of cash income for the *kolkhozian* families." (*Pravda*, April 19, 1937.) And yet out of the principal products of these plots—milk, meat and potatoes—the State takes a great proportion in shape of deliveries in kind.

3 *National Economy Plan for 1936*, 2nd edition, Moscow, pp. 440–441.

	Sovkhozes	*Kolkhozes*	*Individualistic Farming of Kolkhozian Peasants*	*Non-collectivized Peasants*
	DISTRIBUTION OF COWS			
1934	1,755·2	3,029·5	9,563·0	2,643·4
1935 (estimate)	1,731·1	3,420·4	11,095·5	1,053·6
1936 (Plan) ..	1,757·0	4,010·0	12,032·0	1,094·0
	DISTRIBUTION OF PIGS			
1934	3,527·4	3,511·6	6,755·5	1,460·9
1935 (estimate)	4,111·9	5,102·9	12,215·3	875·9
1936 (Plan)	4,764·7	7,250·0	16,960·6	989·4

These figures not only show that on their "plots for private use" the *kolkhozian* peasants possess in their personal capacity more cows and pigs than the *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* combined, but also that the part played by the non-collectivized peasants in stock-breeding is still important. In 1935, no more than 25·8 per cent of the total cows and 26·2 per cent of the pigs were collectivized. Private enterprise is therefore far from being extinguished in this important section of the national economy.

Since the end of 1936 the development of stock-breeding has again become an object of close attention. As a consequence of the drought, which in that year brought about a falling off in crops, in some parts of the U.S.S.R., not only was the increase of live stock brought to a standstill, but there was a very high rate of mortality among cattle.[1] It was probably owing to this bad situation that the Soviet authorities left unpublished both their stock-breeding programme for 1937, and the final figures of the results achieved under the 1936 Plan, in the same branch of agricultural effort.

Rural Over-Population

The fact that the *kolkhozes* own only a small portion of the total

1 According to the declaration of the Deputy-Commissar for Agriculture of the U.S.S.R., "the bad crops of fodder in the Volga region, and in certain districts of the non-black soil zone, have resulted in a very strained situation on the spot, as it is very difficult to provide food for the cattle." The result is that the problem facing the *kolkhozes* of the said regions is not so much of increasing their live stock, as of "maintaining, if possible, the high level of stock-breeding reached in July 1936" and of "preserving the animals born during the winter." "Fodder must be used rationally, with prudence and economy. Special attention must be paid to the utilization of straw. In wooded districts it is necessary to make large use of twigs as fodder." (*Socialist Agriculture*, March 1, 1937.)

live stock, as the above figures show, is a source of difficulty for the intensifying of their agriculture, especially in regions where the nature of the soil required an abundant use of manure to ensure satisfactory results.

This is not the only obstacle, however, to a higher yield from the soil and from agricultural labour in the U.S.S.R. Among the other consequences of the collectivization of the rural areas was that of increasing the surface for sowing by the *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes*, and of bringing about a parallel diminution of the crops sown by non-collectivized farmers.[1] In 1935 the total area sown was divided as follows: 12·2 per cent of this total was put under cultivation by the *sovkhozes*; 82 per cent by the *kolkhozes* (inclusive of the plots for private use of the *kolkhozian* peasants), and 5·2 per cent by the non-collectivized peasants.[2] The table below reproduces the Soviet statistics concerning the average size of agricultural undertakings in 1934 (sown land alone being reckoned):

Sovkhozes	1,643 hectares (4,182 acres)
Kolkhozes	420 hectares (1,050 acres)
Non-collectivized peasants	2·52 hectares (7·00 acres)
Plots for private use of the *kolkhozian* peasants (per household)	0·20 hectares (0·50 acres)

The era of collectivization, therefore, has created large agricultural enterprises which nowadays clearly predominate in the U.S.S.R. And yet, although by monstrous coercion the Soviet Government has succeeded in effecting a mechanical fusion of small peasant farms into large agricultural enterprises, its policy has in the main simply achieved the result that all the disadvantages of large-scale farming have been combined with those of small farming without any of the advantages of one or the other being secured. This is especially true of the *kolkhozes* which cultivate, as has been said, 82 per cent of the sown area of the U.S.S.R. The quantity of the land and the number of able-bodied members they comprise are precisely the same as they were in the aggregate of the former peasant farms which are now merged into *kolkhozes*. The result is that although they actually dispose of a great deal of land, their sowing area is quite insufficient, considering the large reserves of labour which they

1 "Agriculture in the U.S.S.R.," 1935 *Year Book*, pp. 203 and 204.
2 This does not include the quite insignificant sowings of the workmen and employees (0·6 per cent).

are called to employ. The total number of *kolkhozes* in the U.S.S.R. has an average sown area of 2·95 hectares (7½ acres) per working head, while in the *sovkhozes* the average per head is 6·09 hectares (or 15·22 acres).[1] This fact alone demonstrates that the *kolkhozes* unquestionably suffer from an excess of labour which cannot be rationally utilized.

The *kolkhozes* have therefore only the appearance of large-scale agricultural enterprises. Their internal structure preserves, in fact, all the essential defects of small peasant farming—an insufficient quantity of land, an excess of labour, low productivity of the latter, and, as one of its consequences, the difficult material situation of their members. The development of mechanized farming is likely to render the over-population of the Russian rural districts worse from year to year.

It is impossible to find a solution to this difficult situation without fostering the development of stock-breeding, without largely increasing the area of sown land, without intensifying the output of agriculture, and without introducing a profound reorganization of the whole economic and technical system of *kolkhoze* farming. From the technical point of view, the Soviet Government certainly does not cease endeavouring to improve agricultural methods. But the economic side of the problem is evidently no less important. Its solution is so much the more difficult to obtain,[2] as the working basis of the *kolkhozes* itself hampers the powerful stimulus of personal interest and initiative which lies at the root of the rational organization and success of private economic undertakings.

Insufficient Supply of Industrial Commodities

The problem of providing the great masses of the population with industrial articles is also exceedingly far from being yet satisfactorily solved. And as long as this remains unsolved it will be impossible to bring about equilibrum in the general economic conditions of the

1 According to the figures of "Agriculture in the U.S.S.R." (1935 *Year Book*, p. 641.)

2 Thus between 1932 and 1937 a total of 133,000 men and women were trained as agronomists and veterinary workers. (*Monthly Review*, London, February 1938.)

country and to bring about their harmonious development. This problem has, moreover, a primordial political importance.

According to an observer as competent as the French industrialist, Ernest Mercier, it is precisely this discordance between the different branches of national economy which constitutes one of the most dangerous menaces to the very existence of the Soviet Government. This author is rightly convinced that the largest possible production of articles of personal consumption should be the corner-stone of the economic policy of the Soviets. According to his opinion the enormous disproportion which exists in the U.S.S.R. between heavy industry and consumption industry will sooner or later force the masses to assert their demands to the Government, impotent as they are, to satisfy their most elementary needs. This particularly applies to the Soviet workman, for his real wages will necessarily continue at a very low level as long as the present shortage of articles of consumption lasts. Not being in a position to develop sufficiently its consumption industry, M. Mercier writes: "the Soviet power finds itself, in fact, tragically gripped in a vice from which it cannot escape . . . for it cannot hope to keep Russia indefinitely in the state of obsidional isolation as it now does."[1]

We have already cited how much consumption industry was sacrificed to heavy industry during the First Five-Year Plan. We shall now examine the quantitive output of consumption industry more especially with regard to real wages and to the supply of the principal articles of consumption to the population.

When the achievements of the First Five-Year Plan were described in the Press it was claimed that light industry had developed parallel with heavy industry, and had increased its output—in the four years from 1929 to 1932, inclusive—by 87 per cent.[2]

In reality the situation was quite different. If we divide industry into two basic groups—heavy industry, which produces the means of production, and industry producing articles of consumption

1 Ernest Mercier, *U.S.S.R. Reflexions*, Paris, 1936, pp. 43–44. In the same passage Mercier makes the following remark: "The State being itself the only manufacturer, a decrease in the selling prices immediately strikes it to the quick, and if, to avoid an increase in its expenditure, it is obliged to accept a decrease in its receipts, its situation remains just as bad."

2 *Pravda*, January 13, 1933.

—that is, light industry and food industry—their respective activities may be expressed in the following table:[1]

LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY

(In millions of roubles, at 1926–1927 prices)

Years	*Output of Means of Production*	*Production of Articles of Consumption*
1929	10,414	10,829
1930	14,737	13,022
1931	19,092	15,127
1932	22,185	16,646
1933	24,629	17,632
1934	29,900	20,700
1935	38,800	28,000
1936	50,200	35,600[2]

According to these figures the output of articles of consumption was very considerably increased. The complaints of the population and the assertions of foreign visitors to the U.S.S.R., who claim to have observed terrible poverty there, would therefore have no serious basis. The truth is that if the figures in the left-hand column (output of means of production) can be accepted as being nearly exact, subject to a few rectifications, those of the right-hand column (output of articles of consumption) commit a colossal sin of omission, creating a complete misunderstanding. We cannot, of course, analyse here, in all their details, the figures of the Soviet statistics, but a few examples will suffice to throw light on the methods used in their computation.

First example—Among the figures for light industry is included an increase in linen manufacture. How could this increase have occurred when the official sources inform us that the manufacture of flax fabrics in 1932 was 35 million metres less than in 1928? Before 1929 the initial treatment of flax was in the hands of the

1 Figures given by the *National Economy Plans* for 1936, 1937, and 1938.

2 If we compare the figures of the last two years, we find that from 1935 to 1936 the value of the total industrial production in 1926–1927 prices increased from 66,800,000,000 to 85,800,000,000 roubles, which represents an excess of 19,000,000,000 roubles, or 28·4 per cent. Under the two main headings, this excess is apportioned as follows:

Production of means of production: 11,400,000,000 = 29·4 per cent.

Production of articles of consumption: 7,600,000,000 = 27·1 per cent.

According to the report drawn by Grinko, the People's Commissar for Finance, the production of the means of production should in 1937 have increased by 19·5 per cent, and that of articles of consumption by 20 per cent. (*Pravda*, January 12, 1937.) Thus the disproportion between the two industries has not changed in 1937.

peasants, and naturally did not appear at all in the statistics of the State industries. Since that date linen has to a great extent been produced by the State mills. At the end of 1932 there were 350 of these. The value of their output has been added—as increased production—to the total figures for light industry; but the Soviet statisticians have omitted to mention that this "increase" was purely imaginary, for the simple reason that it corresponded to the earlier peasant production, which was not taken into account in the 1928 figures.

Second example—In 1932 the State industries placed on the market 72,000,000 pairs of shoes, instead of the 30,000,000 or so manufactured in 1928. Has the production of shoes really increased? It would appear so, from the Soviet figures, but in reality it has not. Since the inauguration of the First Five-Year Plan the State industries have monopolized all the leather in the country. The working of this raw material by private persons has been forbidden, declared to be a crime, and made punishable by imprisonment. Unable to obtain leather, the private manufacturers of boots disappeared. The official statistics show "increased" output of boots by the State factories, but ignore the fact that production by private firms has been suppressed.

Third example—In 1930 a special People's Commissariat was created for the food industry. Among other things, its jurisdiction extends over flour mills, bakeries, the purchase and sale of meat, poultry, groats, fruit and vegetables. The operations of this Commissariat have alone enabled the Soviet statisticians to speak of an increase in the total output of articles of consumption from 10,800 million roubles in 1929 (or more accurately October 1928–October 1929) to 13,000 million roubles in 1930 and 15,100 million roubles in 1931. Will it be believed that during this period the volume of articles of consumption actually increased by 5,000 million roubles (worked out for each year in the same 1926–1927 prices)? Certainly not! Before the Food Industry Commissariat took charge of the bakeries, people bought their flour and baked their own bread. They also bought meat, poultry, groats, and vegetables in the free market without the intervention of the Food Industry Commissariat. The latter's operations now figure in the statistics, whereas formerly the same operations were private, and were not recorded. To draw a comparison between the 1931 production of the value of 15,100 million roubles and the 1929 production of

10,800 million roubles is an absurdity. It is tantamount to taking for one year the production of cotton goods, and for another year the production of the same fabrics plus that of meat, groats, and flour. In order to arrive at commensurable quantities it would be necessary to add to the figures for 1929 the full value of the transactions of private business during those years. Such a method would clearly demonstrate that the First Five-Year Plan did not result in an increase in the production of articles of consumption.

Fourth example—This throws even more light on the methods of the Soviet statisticians. According to the latter, the total output of the State ready-made clothing industry increased from 619 million roubles in 1928 to 2,291 millions in 1932 (still on the basis of 1926–1927 prices). This would give the impression that during the interval in question the quantity of overcoats, suits of clothes, jackets, trousers, dresses, and other garments was quadrupled. How was this possible when, according to official sources themselves, the production of cotton and wool fabrics had decreased, and there had been no imports? This question is not difficult to answer. Prior to 1929 it was possible, though difficult, to buy materials for clothing in the State shops, and people made their own clothes or had them made by small working tailors and dressmakers. Between 1929 and 1931, these artisans disappeared, under the crushing burden of taxation. The State ceased selling materials by the yard and monopolized the clothing industry as an additional source of revenue. Since then, piece goods have been obtainable only in the form of ready-made—and, as a rule, badly made—clothing. The enormous profits which the State has drawn from the men's, women's, and children's clothing monopoly have been invested in heavy industry—in coal, iron, and copper. The output of the clothing industry has increased, but this by no means proves that the population has been provided with more clothing.

Soviet statistics, by the use of such methods, are deliberately ambiguous. They do not reflect the truth when they purport to show that, between 1929 and 1934, light industry and the food industries increased their combined output from 10,800 million roubles to 17,600 millions. Admitting even that the quantity of raw materials, foodstuffs, and manufactured goods forthcoming from State industry has really increased to that extent, this would not in itself prove that the total quantity of products and merchandise

in the country had become larger than before. Even if the State industries have developed, they have still been unable to make up for the loss caused by the complete annihilation of private production urban and rural, especially in connection with such necessaries as textiles, sugar, meat, groats, vegetables, etc.

It must not be forgotten that a heavy blow was dealt to the consumers from another direction. Prior to 1929, the small artisans and the *kustari* (handicraftsmen) manufactured many household articles. The district of Pavlovo (in the province of Nizhni-Novgorod), for example, was renowned for its manufacture of axes, knives, forks, spoons, scissors, razors, suacepans, padlocks, lamp-burners, etc., with which it supplied the markets of Russia. Under the First Five-Year Plan these artisans were forcibly nationalized and compelled to produce spare parts for tractors and other machines instead of knives and forks. The result has been that the markets have been deprived of household articles and utensils of everyday use. The journal *For Industrialisation* asserted in this connection that "whoever has visited the Donetz Basin knows that the shortage of forks, knives, and plates in that district constitutes a serious and often insoluble problem." Even in Moscow these articles are scarce. *Pravda* stated (June 18, 1932) that in the Frounze canteen—much as in others for that matter—"the workers eat their meals at present without knives or forks."

The following figures show to what extent the handicraftsmen were utilized for the requirements of the giant industrial plants. The Pavlovo artisans, as we have stated, specialized in meeting the domestic needs of the public. Out of 70,000,000 roubles of production imposed on them by the Government Plan for 1931 and 1932, only 10 per cent concerned output of household utensils, etc. This 10 per cent was distributed in advance among administrations and commissariats, and thus never reached the markets.[1] Like the *kustaris*, the State light-industry undertakings ignored, during the First Five-Year Plan, the needs of consumers and devoted themselves solely to those of the industrial plants. Not a teapot, or a glass, or a plate could be bought anywhere, as the factories were compelled to turn out porcelain and glass for the chemical works and the electric power stations, and the immediate needs of the people had to do without. Light-industry output was not intended for the

1 *For Industrialisation*, June 17, 1932.

consumption market. It went mostly to a special organization known as the "off the market fund," which served as a kind of reservoir for the construction and the intensified production of the heavy-industry plants, and the construction of machines, including motor cars, the coachwork of which was upholstered with textile stuffs held back from public consumption.

The review *Soviet Trade* (No. 1 for 1934) published some very interesting figures concerning this transformation of light industry into a subsidiary of heavy industry. In 1930 41·4 per cent of all manufactured articles of large consumption were earmarked for the "off the market fund," and diverted to the needs of production without coming into the consumers' reach. In 1931 this fund absorbed 43·69 per cent of the total output. After 1928 not only was the volume of consumers' commodities diminished—in 1932 for instance, the output of sugar was only 828,000 tons, instead of 1,288,000 in 1928, or a decrease of 36 per cent—but 43 per cent of this reduced total was actually withdrawn from consumption, to the exclusive benefit of production.

It is comprehensible, therefore, that the period of the First Five-Year Plan was marked by terrible poverty and deprivation of the population, which could not procure textiles, clothing, boots, sugar, butter, paper, or tea; not a lamp, or a cork, or a knife, or a fork, and had not the least possibility of obtaining an oil-lamp burner or a common razor. At Tiflis it was possible to buy a burner for a Primus spirit stove for 3 roubles 25 kopecks, but the co-operative store assistant sold only to those who also bought ten roubles' worth of rusty iron screw-nuts.[1] Some retailing shops went so far as to demand a cork from those who desired to buy a glass of mineral water. Ordinary large wooden spoons, which before the War cost three kopecks per pair, were sold at forty times that price, but were usually unfindable.

The people dared not complain of privation. The slightest allusion to the impossibility of satisfying the most elementary needs was denounced as a counter-revolutionary act. Very characteristic of the period was the speech of Postyshev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party and a member of the *Politbureau.* "The Right-Wing Communists," he said, "have tried to make capital out of the problem of light industry. They level the reproach that

1 *Pravda,* June 5, 1932.

all the money has been squandered on the Dniepr hydro-electric station, on the construction of a plant to make machine tools, and we lack calico. Our Party is resolutely opposed to any such game as this 'calico industrialization.' The opportunists, the incredulous, the whimperers moan: 'There is no butter! there is no meat! there are bread cards! Where is your Socialism in all this?' But we others, Marxist-Leninists, we understand perfectly that the nature of a social régime is not determined by the quantity of butter or meat."[1]

The period of the First Five-Year Plan may be defined as an epoch of accelerated accumulation of capital (invested in the building up of a heavy industry and in the construction of machines) to which the national consumption was sacrificed without hesitation or regret. As we know, however, at the close of the First Five-Year Plan the Government remembered the existence of the human being and proclaimed aloud the necessity for intensifying industry for consumption. The period of the First Five-Year Plan may now appear, to some people, to be so remote that it should no longer be referred to in depicting the present-day condition of industry for consumption. Among the watchwords approved in 1935, however, by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on the occasion of the eighteenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, can be found the following characteristic phrases, which are eloquent as to the situation: "Let us develop the exchange of goods between the Socialist towns and the *kolkhoze* villages! More articles for consumption! Let us work for a better quality of goods: for the development of a cultured Soviet trade. Workmen and workwomen of the Soviet retailing shops, fight for the full and modern satisfaction of the aspirations and the needs of the Soviet citizens: for an abundance of goods in the shops! Socialism means the abolition of housing shortage and lack of space! The construction of homes must become the principal care in our schemes of construction! Greater attention to the toilers' health! Fight for the model functioning of our hospitals, sanatoria, and clinics!"[2]

But all these appeals have not prevented Soviet industry from continuing always to concentrate the best of its attention on the output of the means of production, and not on articles of consump-

1 *Pravda*, February 18, 1931.

2 Ibid., October 21, 1935.

tion. On this point the following figures were published by *Pravda* on August 14, 1937:

Years	*Output of Means of Production* *Per cent*	*Production Articles of Consumption* *Per cent*
1913	40·7	59·3[1]
1928	43·0	57·0
1932	53·8	46·2
1933	55·0	45·0
1934	57·4	42·6
1935	59·0	41·0
1936	60·6	39·4
1937 (Plan)	57·0	43·0

To-day again, after twenty years of Bolshevik rule, *Pravda,* according to its custom, still looks to the future for the establishment of a more normal proportion between means of production and articles of consumption. It thinks that "the production of articles of consumption will reach about 55 per cent" at the end of the Third Five-Year Plan; that is to say, in 1942.

Latest Figures for Consumption Industries

What are, then, the figures which indicate the present-day supplies of the Russian population in commodities for consumption and what is their relation to those of the past?

In order to answer this question accurately it is necessary to limit ourselves to products which figure statistically with the same units of weight, length, or volume. Those which are valued in currency units cannot serve as a basis of comparison, owing to the unstable and artificial character of sovietic prices.

In 1913—within her present boundaries, but with a much smaller population—Russia was able to produce 1,356,000 tons of crystallized sugar. Since the Revolution this quantity has been exceeded only in 1930 with 1,469,000 tons. Immediately afterwards there was a rapid fall, the yield of sugar beet having been seriously affected by the consequences of collectivization. In 1932 the output was only 828,000 tons; in 1933, 995,000 tons. From 1934 onwards the sugar industry began to recover from the adverse effects of collectivization, the output being 1,350,000 tons in 1934, and 2,100,000 tons in 1936. The 1937 Plan called for an output of 2,600,000 tons, that

1 This figure of 59·3 per cent is certainly below the reality, because before the Revolution the largest part of the output of articles of consumption escaped all statistical computation, as already explained (see pp. 260, 399, 400 and 406).

is to say the exact figure which the First Five-Year Plan had foreseen already for the economic year, October 1932 to October 1933.[1]

Here are some figures concerning the production of other articles of large consumption.

At the *Stakhanovist* Conference in Moscow, in November 1935, Molotov gave as preliminary estimates for the actual production of 1935, and as amounts to be produced under the Plan of 1936, the following figures: soap, in 1935, 484,000 tons (2·5 kgs., or 5·5 lb. per head), and under the 1936 Plan, 581,000 tons; sausage in 1935, 108,000 tons (0·64 kg., or 1·4 lb. per head), and under the 1936 Plan, 170,000 tons; tinned fish in 1935, 13,600,000 quintals (7·7 kgs., or 16·9 lb. per head), and under the 1936 Plan, 17,800,000 quintals.

Below is a table showing the production of a few other articles of great consumption.

	Textiles				Leather Shoes
	In Cotton[2]		*In Wool*	*In Flax*	
	TOTAL QUANTITIES				
	(*a*) *Aggregate*	(*b*) *For Consumption*			
	In Million Metres				*In Million Pieces*
1932	2,719·7	—	91·3	130·0	82·0
1933	2,727·0	2,393	83·7	140·2	75·5
1934	2,732·5	2,438	73·7	152·7	—
1935	2,632·5	2,390	79·9	213·0	84·8
1936	3,299·9	2,700	97·5	286·0	122·0[3]
1937 (Plan)	4,084·0	—	108·0	380·0	170·0[3]
	PER HEAD OF POPULATION[4]				
	In Metres				*In Pieces*
1935	—	14·3	0·48	1·27	0·51
1936	—	15·9	0·58	1·68	0·72
1937 (Plan)	—	—	0·63	2·23	1·00

1 The official figures for sugar production from 1913 to 1937 are found in the following publications: *Control Figures of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. for the Economic Year 1927–1928*, p. 498; *The Five-Year Plan of the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R.*, vol. i, Summary, p. 144; *The National Economy Plan for 1936*, p. 430; *Economic Life*, January 16, *1937*; *The Official Plan for 1937*.

2 The figures for cotton goods under (*a*) indicate the aggregate production, including both the manufactured goods ready for delivery to consumers and other products of cotton industry (raw textiles, technical textiles, etc.). On the contrary, the figures under (*b*) refer only to manufactured materials ready for delivery to consumers. The second row of figures has already been given on p. 374, where the sources are also quoted.

3 The production of shoes for 1936 and 1937 (Plan) includes footwear of all kinds, while the figures for the previous years refer solely to leather shoes.

4 Taken as 167 millions for 1935 and 170 millions for 1936 and 1937.

These figures show that in 1937 light industry was still producing an insignificant quantity of articles of large consumption, about half a pair of shoes, a little over a half-metre of woollen goods, and less than two metres of linen, per head of the population.[1]

It would, of course, be very interesting to be able to compare the distribution of the articles of large consumption per head of population in 1936 and in 1913. The proportion of Russia's textile productions corresponding to the territory of the U.S.S.R. was in 1913[2] for cotton materials (ready for delivery to the consumer) 2,224 million metres, for woollen goods 89 million metres, and for flax materials 199·7 million metres, which give as figures per head of the population—cotton piece goods, 15·9 metres; woollen, 0·63 metre; linen, 1·43 metres. Production in 1913, therefore, was per head larger than in 1935, and only for linen goods slightly below that of 1936. As we have already pointed out, however, the figures concerning the pre-war output of articles of consumption cannot be compared with the Soviet figures. The latter include the whole of the industrial production of the country, which has been entirely monopolized by the State; whereas before the War the greater part of the output of small private industry and of the handicraft workers (*kustari*), as well as the domestic industries, escaped all statistical record. Besides, pre-war Russia always used to import a certain

1 In addition to those given in the text above, the following figures are worth noting:

	1935		*1936 (Plan)*	
	Quantity		*Quantity*	
Articles	*Total*	*Per Head*	*Total*	*Per Head*
Felt hats (millions)	2·3	0·01 unit	3·6	0·02 unit
Butter (million tons)	154·2	0·9 kilo	193·0	1·1 kilo
Alcohol—				
Million hectolitres	6,100·0	3·6 litres	7,000·0	4·1 litres
Million gallons ..	134,200	3·16 quarts	154,000·0	3·61 quarts
Cigarettes (millions)	80,000	479 units	88·5	520 units

Save for alcohol—of which the output per head amounted in 1913 to 4·0 litres (or 3·52 pints)—the figures of the above table cannot usefully be compared with pre-revolutionary ones, as the latter did not take full account of small private production.

Detailed figures concerning the output of articles of large consumption and of foodstuffs are found in the *National Economy Plans* for the corresponding years; *For Industrialisation* for November 17, 1935; *Izvestia* for January 12, 1936; *Light Industry* for January 3, 1937, and January 9, 1937; *Economic Life*, February 6, 1937.

In its issue for May 28, 1937, *Pravda* states that, according to the provisional plan of the Commissariat for Light Industry, "a little over a metre of woollen piece goods will be produced per head by the end of the Third Five-Year Plan." "This is not enough," adds the paper; "a way out of this situation must be found."

2 See above, p. 374.

quantity of foreign woollen and other textiles. Under these conditions, if we take into consideration the whole of Russian production—whether statistically accounted for or not—the population was certainly better supplied before the War with articles of large consumption than it was in 1936, or in 1937, even should the Soviet light industry have in the latter year attained the objectives fixed for it.

On the whole, light industry has in 1936 fulfilled the task which was assigned to it for this year, and has increased its total output by 34·5 per cent. This is an unquestionable success. For 1937 the Plan imposed a new increase of 22·4 per cent. "But even if we attain this goal," writes the Commissar for Light Industry, "light industry will not have fulfilled the programmes of the Second Five-Year Plan."[1] If the Commissar had been more precise and more sincere he would have indicated that the complete execution of the 1937 programme would still have left light industry a long way behind not only the objectives of the Second Five-Year Plan, but also behind those which the First Five-Year Plan drew up for the economic year 1932–1933.[2]

The Plan for 1937 provided, it is true, for an increase in articles of large consumption, varying between 11 and 39 per cent; but even had these objectives been attained, the output would still have been at the beginning of 1928 considerably below the similar estimates of the First Five-Year Plan for 1932–1933. Now, as we shall see later in 1937, the practical achievements of light industries—especially in respect of cotton goods—have substantially lagged behind the Plan for that year.[3]

Be that as it may, towards the middle of 1936 an increased amount of articles of large consumption appeared on the market.

1 *Light Industry*, January 9, 1937.

2 It was proposed to produce in 1937 108,000,000 metres of woollen goods, whereas the First Five-Year Plan provided for 270,000,000 metres for the economic year, October 1932 to October 1933. For linen goods the figure forecast for 1937 was 373,000,000 metres as against 500,000,000 metres in the 1932–1933 programme.

3 *Pravda* (September 17, 1937) stated in this connection: "There is an abundance of raw material and a shortage of finished products. . . . The heads of the Commissariat for Light Industry have either not known how to, or did not want to, organize the transformation of the raw material. . . . The result is that the country has been deprived of a great quantity of merchandise of which the population stands in need."

The same issue states that the Commissar for Light Industry, Lubimov, and his two assistants, Ieremin and Myshkov, have been "relieved of their duties" because of their "disgraceful management."

Previously, there was so little of them that no money could buy them. Thenceforward the *stakhanovists*, the privileged workers and, in general, all those whose earnings were high, were in a position to buy them. This accounts for the somewhat better and tidier appearance of the people in the cities.[1]

Soviet Achievements in Heavy Industry

In the sphere of heavy industry the Soviet Government's achievements down to the closing period of the Second Five-Year Plan are certainly imposing, as the detailed table on opposite page shows.[2]

The Plan for 1938 is in this respect a little less ambitious as compared with the 1937 Plan. Here are a few figures planned for this year: oil, 33·5 million tons; coal, 139 million tons; pig iron, 15·8 million tons; steel, 15·6 million tons; rolled metal and tubes, 12·5 million tons; cement, 6·3 million tons; production of electric power, 34·000 million k.w.h.[3]

In its effort for the industrialization of the country, the Soviet Government has secured very tangible results during the application of the two Five-Year Plans. The very idea of the intensive development of heavy industry, which was at the base of these Plans, may be carried to the credit of the economic policy of the Soviets. As a matter of fact, a like policy of rapid industrialization had already been practiced in pre-war Russia, the progress of whose economic

1 Specialists in the textile industry have drawn up a comparative list of prices existing in the spring of 1937 in England and in the U.S.S.R. for the same articles, though of lower quality. They took the rouble to be equivalent to $\frac{1}{80}$ of the pound sterling—that is, 3d.—as did Sir Walter Citrine (see p. 386); in other words, at a rate greatly below the official rate of exchange, which on January 1, 1937, was 24·74 roubles to the pound. Nevertheless, the enormity of the prices which the Soviet State imposes on its citizens is very striking:

	Prices in England (Roubles)	*Prices in U.S.S.R. (Roubles)*
1. Silk crêpe de Chine, width 90 cm.	20·00	60·00
2. Silk P.K. spun, width 90 cm.	12·50	35·00
3. Wool serge, width 120 cm.	27·50	100·00
4. Japanese silk, width 90 cm.	10·00	30·00
5. Cotton, width 50 cm.	4·00	10·00
6. Silk crêpe marocain, width 120 cm.	25·00	75·00
7. Cotton voile, width 90 cm.	3·00	19·00

2 The total figures of the development of heavy industry in the U.S.S.R., up to 1934 inclusive, are given in Chapter VI, "The March Towards Socialism," where they are compared with pre-revolutionary totals (p. 258). Some of the figures given there for 1934 differ slightly from those above, owing to their having been taken from other Soviet sources.

3 *Monthly Review* of the U.S.S.R. Trade Delegation in London, February 1938.

Heavy Industry[1]

	1934	1935	1936 Plan	1936 Actual Results	1937 Plan
Crude oil (million tons)	25·6	26·9	30·0	29·6	34·5
Coal (million tons)	93·9	109·2	135·0	126·2	150·0
Pig Iron (million tons)	10·4	12·5	14·5	14·5	16·0
Steel (million tons) ..	9·7	12·7	16·0	16·3	20·0
Rolled metal (million tons)	6·7	9·0	11·5	12·3	15·5
Copper (1,000 tons) ..	53·3	76·0	110·0	100·7	145·0
Sulphuric acid (1,000 tons)	782·0	996·0	1,300·0	1,200·9	—
Cement (1,000 tons)	3,533·0	4,465·0	6,500·0	5,918·0	7,437·0
Output of electricity[2] (thousand millions k.w.h.) ..	21·0	26·3	32·0	33·0	40·5
Motor-lorries (in 1,000)	55·4	77·7	144·5	134·0	195·0
Automobiles (in 1,000)	17·1	19·0	17·0	—	25·0
Tractors (in 1,000's reduced to 15 h.p. units)[3]	114·8	154·1	154·3	—	172·7
Grain combines (in 1,000)	8·2	20·7	61·0	43·0	55·0
Locomotives (units)[4]	1,326	1,529	1,398	1,205	1,425
Railway trucks (in 1,000's reduced to 2-axle type)[5]	33·5	90·8	90·0	75·9	94·6

evolution was even beginning to resemble that of the United States. But before the Revolution this development had been accompanied by a rise in the general level of well-being—a rise which could be gauged by the increase of real wages, and by the expansion of consumption in general. The industrialization of the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, has been obtained at the cost of a severe diminution of the general well-being and the squandering of a considerable proportion of the national capital.

Created at the price of the greatest sacrifices, Soviet heavy industry still yields an effective return far below the needs to be satisfied.

Without wishing to lessen the achievements arrived at by the

1 *The National Economy Plan for 1935*, pp. 500–520; *The National Economy Plan for 1936*, 2nd edition, pp. 410–423; *The Plan* (periodical), 1936, No. 2; *Planned Economy*, 1936, No. 1, and 1937, No. 1, p. 216; *The Plan*, 1937, No. 3, pp. 12–17; *For Industrialisation*, January 3, and March 30, 1937; *Economic Life*, January 16, 1937.

2 From 6,197 k.w. in 1934, the capacity of the electrical power stations rose, by January 1, 1936, to 6,913 k.w. (*Pravda*, November 24, 1936.)

3 The number of tractors produced (in thousands of units) in 1934 was 94·4; in 1935, 113·6; in 1936, 99·2 (Plan) and 111·9 (achievements); and in 1937 (Plan) 79·0.

4 Figures refer solely to locomotives belonging to the Commissariat for Communications, exclusive of those on railways belonging to industries, and on narrow-gauge lines, and of electric and motor locomotives.

5 Figures include the trucks of the Commissariat for Communications, as well as those of the industrial enterprises.

Soviets in heavy industry, we must not lose sight of the fact that they are not so impressive when the figures are distributed "per head" over the 170,000,000 inhabitants of Russia. Taking only the three key-industries—coal, pig iron, and oil—it is found that Soviet production, per head of the population, is enormously below that of the United States of America, in spite of the constant insistence by the Soviet leaders on the necessity of equalling and surpassing American output figures.

1935 OUTPUT IN TONS
(Per Head of Population)

	Coal	*Pig Iron*	*Oil*
U.S.S.R. ..	0·62	0·07	0·14
U.S.A.	3·50	0·17	1·13

In the motor-car industry the backwardness of the U.S.S.R., in comparison with the United States of America, is still more striking. The U.S.S.R. in 1937, even if the provisions of the Plan for the year had been fully carried out, would have had a total of only 400,000 motor cars, whereas, in 1935 alone, the United States of America had an output of 4,200,000 cars.[1]

Economic Activities in 1937

As we have seen elsewhere,[2] since the spring of 1937 a wave of suspicion swept over the country, and numbers of responsible men and specialists were suppressed as wreckers. From the middle of 1937 to March 1938, fifty-one People's Commissars, more than three hundred heads of the Communist Party, and more than five hundred directors of various important State economic enterprises were arrested, not to speak of innumerable secondary officials. This destructive action had an adverse effect on the economic output, in quantity as well as in quality. The Soviet authorities imputed to the action of the wreckers the defects which prejudice the working of Sovietic industry: bad working organization, insufficient output, exceeding of credits, exaggerated cost prices, high proportion of waste, defective quality.

One of the marked deceptions of the year 1937 ensued from

1 The same conclusions can be drawn by comparing the German output with that of the U.S.S.R. as they stand to-day. But if previous years are considered, the comparison with Germany puts into relief the growth of Russian heavy industry. In 1913 Germany produced six times as much coal, iron, and steel as Russia. Now Russia has nearly caught up the German production in this sphere. As to iron ore the U.S.S.R. now produces over four times as much as Germany, and about seventy times more oil.

2 See "Rifts in the Sovietic Structure" on p. 246.

stakhanovism, heretofore represented as being the sensational discovery of Socialistic industry. The industries and factories concerned, the Soviet Press complained, were not prevented from remaining below the total output imposed on them by the Plan, although the *stakhanovists* produced from 150 per cent to 200 per cent of the units.

Below is given a general summary of the results obtained in 1937, compiled from data taken from official sources.

According to preliminary estimations, the heavy industry fulfilled only 88·9 per cent of the Plan which was assigned to it for 1937. The copper, cement, and tube industries were indicated as having had a particularly bad output, but the Plan had been fulfilled neither in coal-mining, nor in machine construction, nor in the manufacture of pig iron and steel, nor in metal rolling.[1]

The building industry has been placed "on the rails of industrialization," but the machinery was used in an irrational manner. In 1937, out of the 250 existing excavators, only 165 had worked; the others being immobilized owing to defects.[2]

According to the declarations of the People's Commissar for the Forest Industry, L. Ryzhov, the Plan was carried out in this sphere only in the proportion of 52 per cent, in consequence of

1 *Izvestia*, January 30, 1938.

The Deputy Commissar for Heavy Industry, C. Butenko, writes in the *Pravda* of February 26, 1938: "Compared with 1936, the production in 1937 increased 8·6 per cent for steel and 4·3 per cent for rolling. Excellent results for any country in the world, but insufficient for us, since they are below the Plan. The fault lies in the methods of working. In January 1938 the mining industry furnished 100 per cent of the output required, but the coke-ovens delivered only 89·8 per cent of the programme, and the blast furnaces produced 84 per cent of the Plan. All of them used too much fuel. While the Americans have managed to produce a ton of pig iron with 0·67 ton of coke, the Plan goes as far as admitting 0·96 ton; the Magnitogorsk plant burned 1·025 tons of coke per ton of cast iron."

In the coal-mining industry, the Donetz Basin has raised the daily production from 197,300 tons (1936) to 230,300 tons. It has remained, however, from at least 1,500 to 2,000 tons below the total daily level prescribed by the Plan. (*Izvestia*, January 6, 1938.)

In the field of electricity, the sovietic figures indicate that the power of the central stations went from 1·9 million kilowatts (1928) to 7·5 million kilowatts (1936) and that the supply of current in 1937 reached a total of 36,600 million k.w.h., which put the U.S.S.R. third in the world, instead of fifteenth which she was in 1913. And yet, the production remained 3,000 million k.w.h. below the Plan, with a shortage of 18·6 per cent. (*Pravda*, February 5, 1938, and *Izvestia*, February 2, 1938.)

The production of agricultural machines reached only 73·5 per cent of the 1937 Plan, that of tractors 70·7 per cent, that of machines for light industry 79·8 per cent. (*Construction of Machines*, February 21, 1938.)

2 *Pravda*, February 6, 1938.

which the country lacked sleepers, wood-pulp, etc. The manufacture of paper, for this reason, remained 109,000 cubic metres below the Plan.[1]

Light industry produced, in 1937, to the extent of 14,600 million roubles, which represents an increase of 11 per cent over the preceding year, but the estimates of the Plan were realized only for 92 per cent.[2] The People's Commissar for Light Industry, V. Shestakov, declares[3] that the general result has been bad in this sphere. The cotton industry, the most important, had a particularly defective output. The shoe factories gave satisfaction as to quantity, but the quality of the production was definitely below what it should have been. In 1938, the total manufacture of shoes should provide the population with 150 million pairs; that is an increase of 12·2 per cent over 1937, which was already 37·6 per cent above 1936.

The manufacture of matches had fallen in 1937 to 7,339,000 cases, against 11,000,000 in 1935.[4] As a result of which whole districts lacked this article. The cause for this was attributed to the "Trotsky-Boukharin" bandits.

The food industry has only remained about 2 per cent below the estimate of the plan and has shown an increase of 13·6 per cent compared with 1936. It has improved the selection of articles and is expected to realize in 1938 a fresh advance of 12 per cent. However, the quality has not always been up to the required standard. The 1937 beetroot crop was unprecedented, for which reason the sugar production exceeded that of the preceding years, but the refineries did not know how to benefit by the situation and worked with too heavy losses.

The harvest of 1937 had given a very good yield owing to the favourable natural conditions.[5] If the People's Commissar for Agriculture, R. Eiche, declares that the *kolkhoze* system is invincible, he makes very serious criticisms as to the way work was done in agriculture.[6] It is thus learned that the country, at present, possesses 5,819 mechanical agricultural machinery centres with 367,000 tractors, 104,600 "combines" and 62,300 motor cars, but that the repairs have only been carried out in the ratio of 22 per cent, for which cause a great proportion of the perfected machinery is out

1 *Pravda*, February 12, 1938.
2 *Izvestia*, February 3, 1938.
3 *Pravda*, February 25, 1938.
4 *Pravda*, January 30, 1938.
5 See p. 389.
6 *Pravda*, January 10, 1938.

of working order.[1] Besides, the repair shops are insufficient and have not always the necessary technical equipment. As for the sowings for the 1938 harvest, official circles are displaying a certain amount of anxiety,[2] as the *kolkhozes* have not troubled themselves early enough concerning the preparation of their seeds.[3]

The Soviet Railways

Whatever degree of success the Bolsheviks may have obtained under their economic policy, they have done very little towards the solution of the exceptionally important problem of the Russian railways. As a matter of fact, no serious attempt to place the Soviet railway system on a proper footing was made until March 1, 1935, when Lazar Kaganovich, known as "the Iron Commissar," was appointed to the post of Commissar for Communications. Down to that date, the lines had been completely sacrificed to the needs of industry. For years previously, more and more intense demands had been made on the railways, in spite of the ruinous condition to which the lines had been brought by the civil war and the epoch of "War Communism." Until 1935 the Soviets had neither extended the railway system nor appreciably developed its equipment; they even did not provide the necessary resources to maintain it at a proper level.

In order to secure even small results in the shortest amount of time, Kaganovich endeavoured to reconstitute only about 20,000

1 *Izvestia*, January 5, 1938, and February 6, 1938.

2 *Pravda*, February 25, 1938.

3 If the figures for industrial production as actually returned for 1937 and those estimated for 1938 be compared, a manifest contradiction will be observed. The Second Five-Year Plan, whose programme extended until the end of 1937, was officially declared completed on April 1, 1937, that is, nine months in advance. (*For Industralisation*, April 26, 1937.) For the year 1937 the Plan envisaged a total industrial production of 86,400 million roubles. Now, on December 1, 1937, a decree was published by the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. confirming, for 1938, a Plan of industrial production amounting to 84,300 million roubles (in 1926–1927 prices), "which represents an increase of 15·3 per cent compared with 1937." (*Industry*, December 1, 1937.) (It should be noted that the decree restricts itself to indicate the value in roubles, without specifying the quantities to be produced.)

The official figures place us in the following dilemma: either the production in 1937 was really 86,400 million roubles, in which case the estimates of the Plan for 1938 represented a decrease and not an increase; or else the 84,300 million envisaged for 1938 are actually a rise of 15·3 per cent, and the official figures for 1937 are manifestly exaggerated. This would tend to prove that the Second Five-Year Plan had not been completed on April 1, 1937.

miles out of a total of over 50,000, leaving the rest to be dealt with as opportunity might arise. Even when limiting the effort to less than half of the total mileage, Kaganovich was able to score a comparative success only by adopting methods of dubious character. His policy resulted, in the first place, in a rapid wearing-out of the material, owing to the unwisely intensive burden of traffic imposed upon it, and secondly, in the reduction of passenger traffic practically to the limits of war conditions. The maintenance of the permanent way and the increase of the rolling stock took only third place in Kaganovich's plans, and even then to a ratio which was entirely insufficient. During the period 1917–1936, the total mileage, including the doubling of the lines, was increased from 63,240 kilometres (39,500 miles) to 85,080 kilometres (52,500 miles),[1] or only by 34·6 per cent. During the same period the output of large-scale industry was increased nearly fivefold. The development of the railway system was thus obviously far behind the growth of the volume of goods requiring transport.

For some time past complaints had become more and more common in the Soviet Press with reference to the working of the railways. In 1937 railway transport figures remained, day by day, from 10 per cent to 20 per cent below the Plan. Loadings did not exceed 70 per cent to 75 per cent of the estimates, and thus checked the national economy as a whole. Out of 200 working hours, a truck did not run more than 36 hours, and remained immobilized the other 164 hours in the goods yards, loading or unloading. This defective working is essentially ascribed to the bad work of the men, to the lack of discipline, and to the absence of management by the heads.[2] Here again the hand of the wrecker is alleged, according to the lately prevailing tendency.[3]

Although Treasury credits for the transport systems were increased under the 1936 and 1937 Budgets,[4] it may be stated without fear of any suggestion of bias, that the Russian railways to-day constitute one of the most backward departments in Soviet national economy.

1 *Socialist Transport*, 1937, No. 11–12, p. 36.

2 *Pravda*, January 11 and 24, 1938; *Izvestia*, January 12, 1938.

3 It is also to the wreckers that the Vice-President of the Sovietic Commission of Control, R. Zemliachko, attributes the deplorable state of the river and maritime transport. (*Pravda*, February 14, 1938.) In 1937 the various river and maritime transport services lost 33 per cent of the engineers employed in them, owing to the hunting down of the wreckers.

4 See table of recent Soviet Budgets on p. 331.

Economic Conclusions

In respect of the economic point of view, a few conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing pages.

In the domain of agriculture the "Socialist" State, being disappointed by the output of the *sovkhozes*, is reducing the area of these State "grain factories," representing the most purely Socialistic type of farming. The State thinks it more expedient to base agriculture on the collective farms, the *kolkhozes*, in which it is able to throw all the risks of exploitation on other shoulders—on those of the peasants. Finally, in the face of the difficulty of feeding the urban population, the Communist power has called to its aid the individualistic initiative of the peasants, by conceding to them the tiny "plots for private use." These play a role in the food supply of the country altogether out of proportion to their relative insignificant area.

In the sphere of industry the Soviet Government has undoubtedly the merit of having actively advanced the industrialization of the country. In that it has followed a tendency which was already decidedly marked before the advent of the Soviet power. It has, besides, been powerfully aided in this respect by the enormous natural resources of the country.

Qualitative successes are particularly notable in those branches of industry where each of the different undertakings is by its nature more or less isolated, and functions in a comparatively limited space; where the decisive element is not constituted by the organized effort of large masses of workers, but by the initiative and individual capacity of a qualified personnel comparatively small in number. This observation is topically exemplified in the U.S.S.R. by the unquestionable achievements in aviation as well as by the absence of notable qualitative progress in so far as the railways and the industrial "giants" are concerned. On the other hand, in the domains of railways and of industrial giants, absence of notable qualitative progress is seen: these being spheres where large masses of workers are involved. This fact does not militate in favour of an economic régime which tends to centralize to the utmost the direction of national production, "planned" as a whole.

The increase in quantitative yield, on the other hand, is mainly to be found in the field of heavy industry, to the development of which the Soviet Government has never ceased to devote its

principal efforts. In this sphere, although at the cost of inadequately great sacrifices, really outstanding results have been attained. The problem of providing the masses with all necessary supplies, on the contrary, is still very far from being solved. In fact, after twenty years of existence, the Soviet Government has not yet found the road which might lead to a solution of this problem! Improbable as it may seem, it can be deduced from Soviet statistical data that in the industrialized U.S.S.R. the needs of the population in manufactured goods are being much less satisfactorily met than they were in predominantly agricultural pre-war Russia.

The State now appropriates for its own purposes an enormous proportion of the national revenue. The collectivist system, which it imposes upon industry, agriculture, and trade, and the cumbersome and paralysing bureaucratic machinery which the collectivist system necessitates, weigh heavily upon the country by their exorbitant cost, and hamper the free play of indispensable and fruitful private initiative. An overwhelming part of the national income is immobilized every year by heavy industry, to the prejudice of the immediate needs of the population. Enormous and ever increasing sums are spent every day on the army and on other war credits.

The result is that real wages remain, in the U.S.S.R., at a very low level. The insignificant earnings of the working-class masses do not permit of a larger sale of articles of general consumption, and consequently of their production in greater quantities. In this somewhat indirect manner low wages fetter the development of light industry and the production of foodstuffs, already so neglected under the Soviet Plans. The Russian rural populations, on their part, live in a tragic situation owing to the very low prices paid by the Government for the large proportion of their produce which is requisitioned by the State, and from the excessive dearness of industrial products which they can buy only from the State.

The general line of the Soviet economic policy is therefore incompatible with an efficacious raising of the purchasing power of the consumers. It is precisely this policy which erects an insurmountable barrier against general improvement of the conditions of the masses and pitilessly condemns the people to a debilitating poverty.

The well-being promised by the Soviet leaders more and more resembles the mirage in the desert which invariably vanishes when the exhausted and starving traveller approaches it.

CHAPTER VIII

Cultural Life in the U.S.S.R.

Government Monopoly of Thought

A survey of the U.S.S.R. would be incomplete without an appraisement of its cultural development. The absolute Government monopoly of thought prevailing in the Soviet State gives to it an exceedingly peculiar moral aspect of which the totalitarian and authoritarian States of Western Europe can only furnish a very vague idea.

Any ideological conception not finding its source in the works of Marx–Engels–Lenin–Stalin is outlawed in the U.S.S.R. as "obscuring the minds of the working masses." No doctrine, be it philosophical, historical, social, or political, is tolerated if it differs from the dogmas of dialectical materialism.

Government's Attitude towards Religion

Nevertheless, religion has been treated in the Soviet State with slightly more consideration. The Government dared not destroy, with a stroke of the pen, the existing cults and above all the Greek Orthodox Church of Russia. Hence for a long period the State concealed its real intentions and engaged in devious manœuvres, whose purpose was always to combat religion as a philosophical concept, and to undermine the Church as the organized body of believers.

In their attitude towards religion the Bolsheviks certainly exceed the thought of their masters, Marx and Engels. They refuse, on principle, to follow the prescriptions of the Erfurt programme which proclaims that religion is a "private affair," whereas the parties affiliated to the Second International remained faithful to neutrality in religious matters. An official tract published by the Bolsheviks shortly after the November Revolution (*Concerning the Problems and Methods of Anti-Religious Propaganda*), states: "Revolutionary Marxism recognizes the duty of the State to wage a determined

fight against religion. . . We shall not leave the field open to obscurantism, and shall never grant it the right to disturb the minds of the masses." In agreement with this thesis, the *Red Newspaper* (*Krasnaia Gazeta*) asserted in 1923: "Our aim is to fight religion. In schools and clubs, in society, everywhere; we meet all forms of mysticism and sorcery with scientific materialism. We are obliged to give to this struggle its real political character. For us, religion and church are linked with the bourgeoisie. Having risen against the latter, the worker must actively and vigorously combat the instruments of his enslavement."[1]

Problem of Religion in Soviet Constitutions

It would, however, be vain to seek, in the successive Soviet Constitutions, the slightest intimation that the Soviet State considers the fight against religion not only its right but its absolute duty. The Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. adopted in July 1918 is based on the principle of the State's neutrality in religious affairs. In article 13 the Constitution states: "In order to ensure real liberty of mind to the workers, the Church is separated from the State, and the school is free of the Church, and freedom for both religious and anti-religious propaganda is granted to all citizens." As a result of subsequent changes in the Soviet Constitutions, the principle of the State's absolute neutrality in religious matters was modified, in that liberty of propaganda was conceded to anti-religious doctrines only, while believers were merely granted permission to "practice their cult freely." In the text of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. amended on May 22, 1929, Article 4 is worded as follows: "Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda are granted to all citizens." The Stalinist Constitution of December 5, 1936, contains no new provisions bearing on freedom of conscience. In Article 124 it states: "In order to guarantee liberty of thought to citizens in the U.S.S.R. the Church is separated from the State and the school is free of the Church. The unhindered exercise of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propa-

1 The Soviet Press has subsequently persisted in this attitude to religion. "Religion and Socialism," wrote *Izvestia* on August 24, 1929, "are incompatible. . . . To be an atheist oneself and be indifferent to the beliefs of others is not at all in keeping with the Marx-Lenin tactics of the Bolsheviks. To declare religion to be a private matter is to take a purely reformist attitude. Such passivity of mind is particularly inadmissible . . . among the advanced elements of Soviet proletarian society."

ganda are granted to everyone." But this formula, however restrictive it may be, corresponds to the real situation only in so far as it concerns the rights of anti-religious doctrines. The contrast between the written Constitution and actual fact is perhaps nowhere so flagrant as in questions relating to the practice of religious cults.

Article 13 of the Communist Party Statutes

As stated before, the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. is blended with the State. Nevertheless its programme solves the problem of religious policy in a spirit diametrically opposed to that of the Soviet Constitution. By chance, in the statutes of the Party, as well as in the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. of 1918, it is Article 13 which governs the attitude toward religion. The statutes read: "The Party tends definitely to destroy the ties existing between the exploiting classes and the organization of religious propaganda, and to effectively free the labouring masses from their superstitions. To this end it will create the most extensive propaganda for scientific and anti-religious education." The Russian Communist Party thus decreed that the struggle against religion, and anti-Christian propaganda, are not a "private affair," but "a Party duty in the general interest of the proletariat." And as it exercises the power of State in U.S.S.R., it applied to religion and to the Church exactly the same methods of class struggle as those it had used against the bourgeoisie in all other domains.

Measures taken by the Soviet Government regarding the Church in 1917–1918

In his message to the People's Commissars dated October 13, 1918, the Patriarch Tikhon,[1] head of the Russian Orthodox Church, characterized in the following terms the measures adopted towards the Church by the Soviet Government during the first year of its

1 At the very moment when the Bolsheviks carried out their *coup d'état*, the ecclesiastical council of the Orthodox Church, then sitting in Moscow, decided to restore the Patriarchate abolished by Peter the Great early in the XVIIIth century, and elected Tikhon as the eleventh Patriarch of the Russian Church. By suppressing the Patriarchate and placing the Church under the tutelage of the State, Peter the Great had aimed at crushing the resistance which the highest dignitaries of the Russian Church—in the persons of the Patriarchs Joachim and Adrian—opposed to his work of reform. Peter's immediate object was attained, but the Church thereby lost not only its independence, but also the benefit of its moral influence.

existence: "No one feels safe. Hundreds of defenceless men are seized; they are left to rot for months in prison, and are often executed without any judicial proceeding. Bishops, priests, and monks, innocent of any crime, are executed simply upon collective and summary charges of vague, indefinite counter-revolutionary activities. . . . You have thrown the conscience of the people into confusion. . . . It is in matters of religious belief that violation of liberty is felt the most painfully and cruelly. . . . You outrage the servants of the Church. You force the bishops to dig trenches, as in the case of Bishop Hermogen. You compel priests to perform degrading tasks. You have laid hands on Church property built up by generations of believers. You are destroying the traditional form of the religious community—the parish. . You dissolve diocesan assemblies; you interfere with the internal administration of the Church; you deprive children of the spiritual nourishment necessary for their education."

However, even in the early years of their rule, the Bolsheviks did not confine themselves to combating the material organization of the Church. From that time it was the idea of religion itself which they sought to discredit in the minds of the masses. The progressive destruction of the organization of the Church was only one of the measures used to prepare the ulterior ideological offensive.

Support Lent to Rival Religious Bodies

After these sporadic attacks, the Soviet Government engaged in a systematic and relentless fight against the Orthodox Church. It first endeavoured to oppose to the latter other religious currents more pliable in their attitude towards the demands of the Government. Thus it most actively upheld an organization called the "Living Church" which had sprung up in opposition to the traditional Church. Definitely established in 1922, strong in Bolshevik support, and moreover favoured by the imprisonment of the patriarch, the "Living Church" temporarily succeeded in seizing the supreme ecclesiastical power. Assembled in council, its adepts declared Tikhon a traitor to the Church and divested him of his priestly and monastic dignities. The same council likewise decreed that the restoration of the patriarchate itself was a counter-revolutionary act, and resolved to bring the Church back under the authority of the councils. It also decided to close the convents and to replace monastical orders by Communist brotherhoods.

Finally, it proclaimed that the Soviet power alone could bring about the reign of God on earth.

The "Living Church" and the Orthodox Population

Yet at the moment when the outward success of the "Living Church" seemed at its zenith, its own members began to realize that its rise had been purely artificial: the Orthodox masses were manifestly hostile to the whole proceeding. Thus, in a pamphlet published in 1923 by the members of the "Living Church" themselves, we read that "the overwhelming majority of the clergy and ecclesiastical communities refused to recognize the new Church administration. . . . The bishops and priests of the 'Living Church' were interrupted while conducting services, and could not appear in church or in the street without being rebuked and even insulted."

Attempts to "Legalize" the Church

Following this setback, the Soviet Government decided to modify its tactics and secure a hold on the traditional Church, disintegrating it from within by "legalizing" it, with certain reservations. Patriarch Tikhon, still in prison at that time and wishing to put an end to the increasing disorganization of the Church, consented to negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Government. He died shortly after being set at liberty, and his successors continued in the path he had traced. They, however, were merely appointed as *locum tenens*, no new elections of patriarchs being permitted by the Bolsheviks. The essential features of this compromise were set forth in a declaration made in 1926 by the bishops who had been exiled by the Soviet Government to the Solovetsk Monastery, on the White Sea. "In view of irreconcilable ideologic differences," they wrote, "clashes between the Church and Government can be prevented only by the strict application of the law with regard to separation of the Church and State. The Church does not seek to overthrow the established order. . . It does not call upon anyone to engage in political activity; it submits to all laws and ordinances of the authorities." To this the patriarchal *locum tenens*, the Metropolitan Sergius, replied that "only academic dreamers can imagine that such a vast community as our Orthodox Church, with its whole organization, could exist if it did not reckon with temporal authority."

In negotiating for its official recognition by the Soviet Govern-

ment, the heads of the Church hoped to secure for it a relative internal freedom. But they did not succeed. Having wrested from them the declarations required, the Bolsheviks nevertheless persisted in oppressing the Church. In face of the evidence pouring in from every side, the Metropolitan Sergius was compelled to realize that his policy was not bringing any appreciable result.

New Government Offensive against the Church

From 1928 onwards, the Government offensive against the Church took particularly vigorous forms. It now became a question of destroying religion entirely. The "Association of Atheists" developed a feverish activity, which enabled the Government to throw the responsibility for most of its anti-religious activity upon the alleged spontaneous aversion of the masses towards the Church. The central and local authorities began to receive petitions for the removal of bells whose ringing disturbed the population, also for the burning of ikons and the closing of churches. The authorities hastened to comply with what was described as "the desire of the toiling masses," "the request of the workers," "the decision of the plenary meeting of the peasants," "the resolution of the town soviet," etc. In some cases these measures led to the destruction of priceless historic monuments. In Moscow, for instance, the buildings of the Simonov Monastery, dating back to the XIVth century and of very great interest, were blown up "at the request of the workers." In September 1929 the newspaper *The Anti-religious* (*Antireligioznik*) reported that, in the course of the previous six months alone, 423 churches had been closed (243 in towns and 180 in villages). Of these 156 had been converted into theatres, cinemas and museums; 38 into schools; 14 into co-operatives; 10 into veterinary centres; 29 had been demolished and 171 left idle. Furthermore, 154 town and 163 village churches were at that time scheduled for demolition.

In 1930 the Metropolitan Sergius was obliged to notify the Government of the desperate situation into which Bolshevik policies had plunged all religious communities. Animated by a desire to deliver the Church from its extreme distress, the Metropolitan Sergius went further than any of his predecessors in making concessions to the Soviets; he thus created much confusion not only among those of the clergy who had emigrated, but also among the high Church dignitaries who had remained in their country. No

attempts at appeasement, however, were of any avail against the basic principles adopted by the Communist Party in regard to religion. On the contrary, each succeeding victory rendered the Party even more aggressive.

The "Five-Year Plan of Atheism"

The decree of May 15, 1932, inaugurated the "Five-Year Plan of Atheism," whose avowed object was the eradication of religion. According to that plan, "by May 1, 1937, not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the U.S.S.R., and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."

Offensive against the Church Continued in less Direct Form

This plan did not materialize, and it can to-day be stated that it never will. The conversion of a whole people to atheism has met with the same obstacles as the economic building up of Communism and has proven itself far too incompatible with the mentality of a large part of the population. In the end, the "Association of Atheists," presided over by the notorious Iaroslavsky, was compelled to admit that, during recent years, the religious aspirations of the masses—this "extremely tenacious survival" as he called them—have manifestly increased. In fact, according to the Soviet Press, there remained in 1937, in the U.S.S.R., more than 30,000 religious communities.[1]

The Communist Government has apparently realized that the religious spirit cannot be overcome by the crude methods it has been using. Neither the closing of churches, nor the persecution of clergy, nor public outrages inflicted upon believers, could extirpate the need for religion deeply rooted in the popular soul. Moreover, recent observations would seem to indicate that some of the vexatious measures hitherto applied against the cult are being somewhat tempered.

Anti-religious processions at Christmas and Easter have been suppressed; priests have been granted the right to vote; the sale of Christmas trees, forbidden up to a short time ago, has been authorized; a number of other minor concessions made and, in general, the external forms of harassment against the Church are less evident.

1 "Truth of Communist Youth," *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, August 10, 1937.

However, the struggle against religion has not ceased. This religious *N.E.P.* came to an end relatively soon. The summer of 1937 marked the beginning of a new campaign against the priests and believers. Charged with "counter-revolution," they are, as heretofore, regularly imprisoned, banished, and even shot. In part, though not entirely, these persecutions could be explained by the desire to annihilate the influence of the religious world during the elections to the Supreme Council in December 1937. Since then the persecution of the clergy has been based on new grounds. Whereas hitherto priests had been charged with propagating counter-revolutions or anti-socialist obscurantism, the Congress of the "Association of Militant Atheists," held in January 1938, accused the clergy wholesale of being in the service of the military staffs of the Fascist States, of disorganizing the army, of trying to wreck railways, and of other acts of treason. The apprehension of a foreign aggression which lately has been widely spread in the U.S.S.R. has thus been put to use against the Church, as it was against those suspected of harbouring little sympathy for the régime.

In short, religion is, under Sovietic conditions, the only form of life remaining more or less independent from Communist domination, but this very fact exposes it to incessant persecution, either open or veiled.

The Press in the U.S.S.R.

It is in the Press, which it controls absolutely, that the Soviet Government has found the most vigorous and effective means of influencing public opinion. "Our Party and Press are inseparable," says the Bolshevik Ingulov in his book *The Party and the Press*, an interesting work from many points of view. "Our Party crystallized around the Press." The Government acts in this domain without hesitation or half-measures: the official Press alone has the right to exist in the U.S.S.R. Of the newspapers published in the Soviet Union, the two principal ones are *Izvestia*, the official organ of the Government, and *Pravda*, the official organ of the Communist Party.[1] These papers interpret from day to day the ruling doctrine and diffuse authoritative instructions in problems of practical policy. Besides these two main organs, whose articles are frequently too abstract for assimilation by the ordinary reader, a large number

1 In 1937 the circulation of *Pravda* attained 1,900,000 copies. (*Twenty Years of Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1937, p. 87.)

of special papers are published in the U.S.S.R. for the use of the peasants, the workers, the Red Army, and the League of Young Communists (*Komsomol*). These are presented in a language suitable to the class of readers for whom they are intended.

At the time of the *N.E.P.*, the newspapers tried not only to deal with matters relating to various Government plans, but to appeal to the sympathies of the public, to cultivate their intelligence and to refine their minds by the choice of subjects; in order to establish contact with their readers, they instituted a system of factory and village correspondents. These, in reality, became "informers" to the Government, which used them to reinforce its supervision even in the remotest corners of the country.

The Stalin Five-Year Plan once more modified the character of the Soviet Press, whose primordial role is no more limited to expounding the intentions of the Government. It must, in addition, take care that the militant catchwords, which the Government wishes to see transformed into action, penetrate the minds of the masses on the prescribed date. Every article appearing in the Press is, as a rule, inspired by the Government, be it that local forces must be guided towards some special "front" for the "building up of Socialism" or that it be found necessary to "liquidate" a gap in production, or to "establish contact between villages and factories," or to "storm" some economic position, or to "unmask wreckers and *saboteurs*," or to sign and present petitions to the authorities on questions and along lines determined by Government policy, etc. The publication of an article by Stalin or an interview with him in a Soviet paper, especially in *Pravda*, which has in fact become his personal organ, may sometimes completely change the policy of local authorities. In other words, under Stalin, the Press is not only an instrument of information and propaganda; it also plays the part which, in the army, is fulfilled by instructions issued in the daily orders.

Posters as Means of Official Propaganda

To work upon the great mass of the population, the U.S.S.R. favours the use of posters and placards. Immediately after the November Revolution, there was a generous display of posters, violent in subject and glaring in colour. Under the *N.E.P.*, Soviet propaganda made slightly less use of the poster, but the Five-Year Plan restored its previous importance. The principal themes of the

poster to-day are entirely determined by Stalin's schemes for the collectivization of agriculture and the industrialization of the country.

Of course, the Press is far from being the only instrument serving the Government in the dissemination of its ideas. Sir Walter Citrine, the Secretary General of English Trade Unions, when visiting the U.S.S.R. in 1935, was struck by the ubiquity and intensity of Soviet propaganda. "Propaganda is everywhere," he writes, "and there is no escape from it and no challenge to it. There is never any source from which the worker can learn the other side. He only hears one side. That is the dreadful thing about it."[1] The methods adopted by the Soviet Government are thus described by Citrine: "Get hold of the children in the crèche. Follow them through the kindergarten, then through the school. Then get them into the Pioneers and the young *Komsomols*. Keep at them with incessant propaganda. Propaganda! Propaganda!—from morning to night. On the wireless, films, pictures, posters, textbooks, follow them everywhere."[2]

All intellectual life in the U.S.S.R. is subordinated to the single aim of fashioning the collective mentality of the people. This task has fallen primarily upon literature.

Tradition of Russian Literature

Russian literature of the XIXth century revealed to the world a large number of highly talented writers, including such great men as Pushkin, Leon Tolstoi and Dostoievsky. In spite of the censorship of the Tsarist régime, Russia was always deeply attached to her spiritual and intellectual freedom, and never cared to acknowledge or follow any other path than that of free and independent creation. The Bolshevik Revolution shattered this sacred tradition and transformed Russian literature into a handmaid of Soviet policy.

The *coup d'état* of November 1917 found Russian letters in a state of fermentation favourable to the designs of the new Government. The school of symbolism, which had blossomed at the beginning of the XXth century and brought about a revival of poetry, was declining even before the War. Symbolism was then attacked by

1 W. Citrine, *I Search for Truth in Russia*, London, 1936, p. 307.
2 Ibid., p. 254.

futurism, which in general rebelled against all literary traditions.[1] Even prior to the Revolution, futurists boasted that they would "throw Pushkin overboard" and do away with Raphael and Michael Angelo.

When the November Revolution broke out, futurism was the most advanced school of literature and art, and it therefore received prompt support from the new Government. Prominent futurists—poets, artists, musicians (Maiakovsky, Punin, Lurié, etc.)—were immediately assigned to posts connected with the Commissariat for Education, whose functions extended over the whole field of art, and at the head of which was Lunacharsky.[2] It is true that neither the Government nor the Communist Party identified themselves officially with futurism, but the support received by the latter enabled it to lead the fashion in literature during the early days of the Revolution. Futurism, with its repudiation of all forms of the old "bourgeois" art, and its readiness to serve the new régime, appeared as an excellent instrument of propaganda.

Under these circumstances, this school sought to monopolize all literature to its own advantage. The poet Maiakovsky, who had the most talent, proclaimed the identity of futurism and proletarian art. "Futurism and proletarian art are one," he wrote, "Futurism is the ideology of the proletariat."[3]

However, the supremacy of this school was of brief duration. It soon lost the support of Lenin, who wrote: "I understand and acknowledge Pushkin; I recognize Nekrassov; as to Maiakovsky, excuse me, I do not understand him." Generally speaking, while

1 Russian futurism was in origin allied to the Italian futurism of Marinetti, but produced a special type of literature in the Russian atmosphere very different from its prototype. The product of futurism in Russia was not always in keeping with its doctrine and its pathos was nurtured on negation and destruction.

2 There was a great deal of aesthetic snobbery in Lunacharsky. He himself belonged to the world of letters and patronized the vanguard tendencies in matters of art. At the period in question, articles by him were appearing in the futurist periodical *The Art of the Commune*, which professed to be the official mouthpiece of literature.

3 The task of monopolizing literature was greatly facilitated by the fact that pre-revolutionary literature disappeared of itself during the development of the Revolution. With a few rare exceptions, former men of letters either ceased writing or emigrated from Russia at the first opportunity. Moreover, general economic conditions were hardly favourable to literary creation; during the years of the civil war, scarcely any works of pure literature were printed at all. Poetry was recited orally: futurists, and their close literary allies, the imaginists, organized poetry soirées, open to the public, in Moscow cafés. Thence came the name of "café literature" which was later used in referring to this period.

supporting futurism, the Soviet rulers accepted it only as a means of combating the former artistic tendencies. The real object of the Communist Party was to create a special literature proper to itself, a "proletarian" literature. With this end in view, the Soviet Government, from the early stages of the Revolution, attempted to lay down the lines of proletarian literature with the help of a special organization called *Proletkult*, a league of writers directed by Bogdanov, one of the pre-revolutionary exponents of the Marxist theory.

The *Proletkult* was entrusted with the "creation of a proletarian, socialist literature, in keeping with the revolutionary and communistic ideals of the proletariat, both in the domain of *belles lettres* and in that of the sciences." For this purpose it had to train new writers of worker and peasant origin, who would receive from "bourgeois experts" appropriate instruction in literary, theatrical, and artistic work.[1]

The *Proletkult* experiment did not last long. This group, which aimed at the dictatorship of letters, was accused of political separatism for having allegedly tried to detach "cultural activity" from the general political and economic policy of the Party. Many Communist leaders, including Lenin, Trotsky, and Bukharin, disavowed the *Proletkult*, which was wound up without having produced the expected results.[2]

These attempts to hastily establish a special proletarian, socialist culture—first on the basis of futurism, then on that of the *Proletkult*—were the logical consequence of the faith then professed by Lenin, that Russia "was marching full speed to Socialism." In the cultural domain, they directed a rude offensive on the old world, parallel to that which was taking place in the economic field; the results were the same in both cases, in that the years of "War Communism"

1 At that time, pre-revolutionary writers such as Briussov (who, it is true, became a Communist), Zamiatin, and Gumilev, devoted much of their time and attention to work in these classrooms in order to teach the art of poetry to sailors, Red Army soldiers, workers, and peasants.

2 However, this experiment had a certain positive value in that it contributed to the awakening of cultural needs among the masses. A group of poets, mostly workmen and including a few peasants, which went by the name of "The Smithy," was connected with the *Proletkult*. Some of them, such as Gastov, Guerassimov, Alexandrovsky, and Kirillov, were not lacking in talent. The members of the "Smithy" were united by revolutionary enthusiasm and faith in the coming triumph of the World Revolution. In their poetical technique they relied almost entirely on symbolism, whose religious mysticism they had replaced by a phraseology of cosmic revolution.

(1918 to 1921) witnessed the most reckless squandering of moral and material forces.[1]

Literature at the Time of the N.E.P.

It was Lenin himself who put an end to these times of distress during which all representatives of earlier Russian letters were reduced to silence. When he realized that his plan to transform Russia immediately into a Socialist state was but an illusion, and that the harassed and famished country needed above all a prolonged "pause," he embodied his change of opinion as to production and distribution problems in the "New Economic Policy"—the *N.E.P.* Doubt as to the possibility of creating an immediate "proletarian culture" likewise led him to conclude that "it would still be premature to relegate to the archives the heritage of bourgeois art."

The relative freedom of creation, which the *N.E.P.* brought to writers, immediately provoked a certain animation in the world of letters. Prose again took its place, after the exclusive reign of poetry. Various literary schools vied with each other, though not without continuously having to take precautions with regard to the Government. Real political manœuvres often attached themselves to academic debates. From the right and left, authors were pressed with questions: "What side are you on? Are you with the communists or against them? With the Revolution or against it?" A

1 All the claimants to literary dictatorship who manifested themselves during the early years of the Revolution belonged to destructive tendencies of more or less equal violence. "We will destroy you, romantic world. . . ." "As soon as you find a White Guard, you place him against the wall, and do not think of Raphael. . . ." "It is time for bullets to riddle the walls of museums." "Batteries of guns, yes. But when will you attack Pushkin and other generals of classicism?" Such appeals were continually coming from the pen of Maiakovsky. The members of "The Smithy" sent out similar ideas in almost identical terms. "We are in the grip of a passionate and rebellious intoxication. No matter if people say, 'You are the butchers of beauty' . . . In the name of our 'to-morrow' we will burn Raphael, we will destroy the museums, we will trample the flowers of art underfoot" (Kirillov). In the face of these manifestations, the old-time writers who had remained in Russia were for a long time reduced to silence. Since they have been afforded an opportunity to express, if only in a low voice, their opinion in literary matters, it is hardly surprising that they appear to be full of the keenest misgivings as to the future of Russian literature. "Our whole existence is at stake," declares Viacheslav Ivanov. "I fear that no more real literature will be born in our country," says Zamiatin. "Hard are the ordeals with which unhappy Russian intellectuals are faced in these days of reality! Material privations are completely overshadowed by moral sufferings. . . . We can only give up, fold our arms, and leave the country to chance." (Extract from the *Messenger of Literature*, 1921.)

number of writers at that time had the courage to declare, although in somewhat veiled language, that the only important thing was "that the author's voice should not ring false, and that the sincerity of the work should stand out regardless of its colour." Art refuses to be "taken by the scruff of the neck." It has "its echo," "its play," which are native to it. The artist cannot be confined to the part of a "social seismograph."[1]

It was also during the *N.E.P.* period that there appeared for the first time in the literary arena writers whose mental personality, to use Trotsky's words, was "formed by the Revolution," but who, nevertheless, made a distinction between pure literature and political writing. Trostky gave the writers of this group a nickname which clung to them: "fellow-travellers." "Their art," he wrote, "does not identify itself with the proletarian revolution; they are merely artists who are accompanying us for a while."[2] This school was chiefly characterized by the fact that it devoted itself to the problems of the Revolution, and treated them with the maximum degree of objectivity possible at that time.

During the period from 1922 to 1928 the "fellow-travellers"—not without a struggle—took possession of the literary arena. Coming mainly from pre-revolutionary intellectual circles, they were provided with talent, education, and experience. In 1924 they had in fact at their disposal the leading and most important monthly magazine which had appeared since the Bolshevik Revolution, *The Red Earth*, whose editor-in-chief was the Communist Voronsky.

Struggle Between Literary Tendencies During the N.E.P. Period

However, even under the *N.E.P.*, the campaign in favour of a certain independence of literature encountered passionate objections

1 Such was the profession of faith of a certain number of writers, several of whom had undeniable gifts (Zoschenko, Fedin, Slonimsky, Nikitin, etc.) and who were grouped together in a union called "Brothers of Serapion." In the conditions prevailing at that time, the very choice of this name was significant. It was borrowed from E. J. Hoffmann, German Romanticist of the early XIXth century, who had used it to so designate his friends who had gathered at his house on the day of St. Serapion the Hermit.

2 According to Trotsky's testimony, the "fellow-travellers" were about twenty to thirty years of age and included writers such as Pilniak, Babel, Seifulina, Leonov, etc. Later on, they were joined by men of the preceding generation, who had already made a name for themselves prior to the Revolution, such as Alexis Tolstoi, Ehrenburg, Veressaiev, Prishivin, Lidin, etc.

from other literary circles, especially from "The Pan-Unionist Association of Proletarian Writers" and from Proletarian literary organizations like "October" and "On Guard." In 1924 the Pan-Unionist Conference of Proletarian writers proclaimed in a resolution that "the domination of the proletariat was incompatible with that of a non-proletarian ideology and, in consequence, of a non-proletarian literature" and that "it could not be otherwise, since, in a society divided into classes, literature cannot remain neutral but must actively serve one class or another." The conference relegated the "fellow-travellers" to the rank of counter-revolutionaries and demanded that the Government should recognize the principle of hegemony of proletarian literature.

Yet, under the *N.E.P.*, the Commissar for Education, Lunacharsky, felt obliged to protest in person against "the over-zealous partisans of proletarian culture, who refused to take into consideration the particular nature of artistic work." On its side, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in a lengthy declaration "concerning the policy of the Party in the field of literature," postponed to a more or less distant future "the imperative task of conquering proletarian positions" in this domain. For the time being, the Party pronounced itself against "communist pride, pretentious, uneducated and self-satisfied" and decided that care should be taken of "the technical achievements of the old mastership" "in so far as a literature really destined for the worker and peasant reader of the masses had not yet been created."

By reason of the relative liberty accorded them at that time, the *N.E.P.* was since 1917 the most fruitful period of activity for writers, although towards its close they had to comply with the requirements of the Government to a much greater extent than in its early days.[1]

Literature Under Stalin's First Five-Year Plan

This situation continued until 1929. The end of the *N.E.P.* saw also the close of the timid blossoming of Soviet literature. The Government mobilized it and enrolled it in the service of the Five-Year Plan which had just been adopted. The only subjects authorized in literature were henceforth planned socialism, indus-

1 It was during this period that such works were created as Fedin's *Cities and Years* and *The Brothers*; Leonov's *The Badgers* and *The Thief*; Olesha's *Envy*; Klychkov's *The Idiot of Chertukhino*; Savich's *Imaginary Interlocutor*; and Kaverin's *The End of Khaza*, etc.

trialization, and collectivization of agriculture. New "literary associations" which had sprung up to serve the cause, and those formed by the old organizations of "Proletarian Writers" which had managed to survive, set out to compete with one another, each seeking to furnish the "People's Chief," Stalin, the finest proof of enthusiastic devotion to the aims pursued by him.[1] They benevolently undertook the censorship of writings and literary morals. The critic Averbach and the poet Bezymensky were their leading spirits, the latter going so far as to declare that "literature's *raison d'être* was solely the carrying out of comrade Stalin's instructions in the social domain."

At this time, bolts from heaven fell upon the "fellow-travellers." They were denounced as tools of the bourgeoisie and their writings declared insufficiently revolutionary.[2] The authorities began to send special brigades of writers and story-tellers to different construction works in order that they should sing the praises of what they had seen. In literary circles the atmosphere became quite unbreathable, and this very soon produced a considerable drop in the literary standard. But this circumstance did not worry the Government in the least. It solely concerned itself to seeing that all literary work was conformed to its policy, control being so much the more easy as under Soviet conditions everything printed is really published under State command.

A little later, in 1934, the first Pan-Unionist Congress of authors had to attest publicly that the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1929 to 1932) had lowered the quality of literary productions, altered the language, deteriorated the style, and that 75 per cent of the works published during that period were utterly worthless.

Relaxation of the Policy of Subordinating Literature to Industrialization

The attempt to completely subjugate literature to production problems continued up to the spring of 1932, that is to say, up to

1 Against the "Pan-Unionist Association of Proletarian Writers" rose the "Association of Proletarian Writers of Russia," which accused the former of not being sufficiently attached to the Stalin policy. But in its turn it was attacked by its own left wing, which was later taken to task by its extremist elements led by Bezymensky.

2 The "fellow-travellers" had to adapt their pen to the new requirements and produce novels devoted to production (*The Volga Flows into the Caspian Sea*, by Pilniak; *The River Sot* and *Skutarevsky*, by Leonov; *Forward, it is Time*, by V. Kataev) and stories (*The Prologue*, by Kaverin, and various articles by Tikhonov and Alexis Tolstoi).

the moment when Stalin was obliged to "slow down the pace" of industrialization. In 1932 a decision of the Communist Party suppressed the Proletarian literary organizations and created a single "Union of Soviet Writers," destined to unite all authors residing in the U.S.S.R., who "took their place on the Soviet platform" and acknowledged the principle of "socialist realism" in literature. The necessity for the literary "reform" of 1932 was officially explained by the triumph of the "building up of socialism" and the rallying of the former "fellow-travellers" to the Soviet Government programme.

One of the inspirers of this measure was Maxim Gorky, who, from that time, played a prominent part in directing Soviet literature. Supported by talented "Proletarian" writers—including Cholokhov and Fadeiev—Gorky launched a campaign for improving the quality of literary work, purifying the language, learning from the classics, and returning to tradition. The ideologic alliance with the extremist innovators in matters of artistic and literary form was severed. Soviet letters suddenly became "conservative" and proclaimed the slogan of "back to realism." Of course the latter had to be "socialist" in character, which manifestly meant a restriction of creative independence. Moreover, the official and voluntary censors continued to watch over the political conformism of literary work and to remind Soviet writers that the liberty granted them in 1932 was by no means absolute. Indeed, in 1934, at the Writers' Congress, the Government representative Zhdanov did not fail to remark to the meeting that Soviet literature must be Bolshevik in tendency.

There is a very significant indication of the situation in which Soviet writers were placed, and which shows to what extent, even after the 1932 "reform," they have felt themselves restricted in their creative work: namely, the wide-spread custom of publishing a novel in sections, at intervals sometimes of several years. It is obvious that the authors are anxious to ascertain how the Government will receive their work, before they complete it.[1]

André Gide visited Russia in 1936 with the hope of discovering in it the promised land overflowing with creative exaltation. He was

1 Thus, for example, the best literary works of recent date, *Quiet Flows the Don* and *Soil Upturned*, by Sholokhov; *Peter the First*, by Alexis Tolstoi; *Our Acquaintances*, by George Herman, have been published volume by volume and have taken several years to appear.

rapidly disappointed. He had to admit that the land of the Soviets was a stranger to liberty, and that, in particular, liberty in the field of letters was non-existent. In the U.S.S.R., however fine a work may be, it is proscribed, if it does not toe the line. "What is demanded of the artist, of the writer," states Mr. Gide, "is that he shall conform" to this line.[1]

Although the liberty accorded to Soviet literature in 1932 was very relative, the new attitude towards it improved and made easier the position of writers, in comparison to what it had been under the oppression of the First Five-Year Plan. However, in 1937 there was a fresh burst of violence against writers accused of "non-conformism" or of political neutrality and bourgeois "aestheticism." Among the victims of this campaign must be mentioned Boris Pasternak, one of the leading Russian poets of the present day. The "purge" launched by Stalin against "spies," "wreckers" and *saboteurs* did not fail to affect the spheres of literature, the theatre, and the fine arts. Numerous authors and playwrights, including some loyal adherents of the Stalin system and members of the Communist Party, were publicly denounced as "wreckers" on the literary and dramatic front, and were arrested and imprisoned. As a result, the literary revival, so triumphantly announced as imminent at the time of the 1934 Congress of Writers, stopped short and has never materialized. In creative literature the number of good, or even interesting, works produced during the past three years is strikingly insignificant. The Soviet critics themselves are obliged to recognize this fact.[2]

New Attitude Towards Russian Literary Classics

One of the positive results of the new policy towards literature is the recognition of the rich heritage bequeathed by the classics. This was especially noticeable in the revival of the Pushkin cult, on the occasion of the centenary of his death in 1937. To-day Pushkin is no longer treated as a "writer of the nobility," alien to true proletarian letters. He is acclaimed as "the pure and abundant source" of all Russian literature of the XIXth and XXth centuries. The *Pravda* states that "Pushkin represented a great step in the

1 André Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, Paris, 1936, pp. 84, 85. English translation: *Back from the U.S.S.R.*, London, 1937, p. 78.

2 In noting the low level of modern Soviet literature, it must be borne in mind that the greatest Russian writers could not tolerate the Bolshevik yoke, and emigrated abroad. This was the case with Bunin, Merezhkovsky, Shmeliov, Zaitsev, Remisov, etc. Others made a name for themselves in literature after installing themselves abroad, such as Aldanov, Sirin, Gazdanov, etc.

evolution of Russian artistic thought. Into his work are woven countless threads stretching across the space of a century. What is more . . . no theme exists which does not have its source in the polyphonic symphony of the great poet's work. It is not without reason that the Party and the Government have ascribed to Pushkin the title of father of modern Russian literature."[1]

Imbued as they are with the ideals of humanism, the Russian classics will inevitably set their stamp on the psychological evolution, signs of which are now appearing among the people of the U.S.S.R.

The other branches of art in the U.S.S.R. have taken a course similar to that of literature.

The Theatre in the U.S.S.R.

Of all forms of art, the theatre is the one most commonly regarded as the most genuine and the richest in Soviet achievement. There is doubtless some truth in this contention. It must be borne in mind, however, that the fundamental currents of the Soviet theatre already existed before the Revolution, if only potentially. Stanislavsky, Tairov, and Meyerhold, who uphold the contemporary Russian theatre, were already famous before the advent of the Bolsheviks. Apart from a series of unhappy experiments, Soviet production, properly speaking, has more particularly manifested itself in the number of theatres and in the penetration of theatrical culture throughout the masses.[2]

Like literature, the theatre under Soviet dominion has passed through several phases. During the early days following the Revolution of November 1917, the Government set out to use the stage as a powerful implement of propaganda, much as it utilized Maiakovsky's poetry of political and social agitation. Under the *N.E.P.* the State was inclined to recognize a certain intrinsic value in theatrical art. In a short time, however, the drama was relegated to the role of an auxiliary instrument in the service of the Stalin Five-Year Plan and of Socialist reconstruction of the country. It was directed at that time to interest itself solely in the problems of class struggle, of economic processes, "*kolkhoze* zeal," and the

1 *Pravda*, September 21, 1936.

2 As regards the standard of acting, however, the Soviet theatre is manifestly behind the pre-war Russian theatre. Thus the Moscow Art Theatre (now the Gorki Theatre), once famed for its actors, has produced no new ones comparable to those who made its reputation in the past.

success of industrialization.[1] However, in the theatrical field the Government was compelled to make much more rapid concessions than it made to literature. The public soon wearied of propaganda plays, and theatres became empty, despite the Russian's affection for stage plays. That is why one observes, during the last few years, a marked return to psychological and personal themes.[2]

The evolution of the internal principles governing stagecraft has brought the Soviet theatre from the extremist experiments of Meyerhold, with his "constructivist" settings and the domination of the producer over both playwright and actor,[3] to a return to realism.

Repertory is still the weak spot of the Soviet theatre. The theatre is waiting for a dramatist who will put his seal upon it and make it possible to speak of the "theatre of so-and-so," as we speak of the theatre of Molière, of Ibsen, of Ostrovsky, of Pirandello. The Soviet stage is "in quest of an author," and the critics are vainly awaiting his appearance.

The Ballet in the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet ballet cannot boast of any achievements proper to itself. All attempts to create a "revolutionary" ballet failed completely. The old traditions, on the other hand, were never repudiated. Having remained the most conservative artistic form, the ballet succeeded in preserving nearly all the precious qualities that enriched it before the Revolution. Everything that enchants visitors from abroad originates entirely from the heritage of pre-revolutionary Russia.

The Cinema in the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet cinema has greater merit. Propaganda still plays an important part in it, but the undeniable technical quality of the

1 The period of the First Five-Year Plan filled the theatrical repertoire with countless *kolkhoze* and "industrial" plays. In the opinion of the Soviet writer, Zamiatin, they were, without exception, all stillborn.

2 Nevertheless, at the end of 1937, Meyerhold was reproached with not sufficiently utilizing the stage in the interests of the sovietic cause, and he was divested of his position as theatrical producer.

3 This method of production led, in the case of Meyerhold, to the mutilation of classical plays, deliberate distortion of the texts of Shakespeare, Molière, Gogol, and Ostrovsky, and the substitution of "bio-mechanical" acrobatics for the art of interpretation.

Soviet product often compensates for its defects. If, on one hand, the films are guilty of a certain coarse brutality, on the other, the acting is often remarkable for its forcefulness. Both these features may, for instance, be observed in a film entitled *Peter the Great*. Lately, a lessening of the inventive spirit of Soviet scenario writers and cinema producers has been noted. At the same time the Soviet cinema is beginning to get away from subjects of pure propaganda, as may be seen from some of the recent films.

Painting, Sculpture, Architecture

These three branches of the fine arts have passed through several vicissitudes under the Soviet régime. The most gifted of the Russian artists have emigrated to other countries.[1] Those who remained in Russia were in the first place nearly all futurists or cubists. The State demanded from them a portrayal of the "machine-man," of the "collective-man," of the "colossal," which in their eyes was the expression of the times. It was only under the *N.E.P.* that art could, for a time, return to the traditions of the past, although it still sought inspiration in the themes of the Communist revolution. Under Stalin's Five-Year Plan the Government began ruthlessly to impose an artistic production inspired by the class idea, and to foster "proletarian" pictures in which the "material object" must be the centre, the sense, the *raison d'être* of the work of art. What was then regarded as proletarian art was the so-called school of "constructivism," a sort of combination between the painter and the industrial designer.

The reaction which benefited literature in 1932 also embraced painting, sculpture, and architecture, and marked a return toward greater realism and simplicity.

In architecture, which evidently plays an important part in a country where much building is done, extreme modernism, at first much in favour, is being abandoned and many large public edifices have lately been constructed in a style of modern classicism, which, it may be said, is related to a tendency already in progress in Russia before the Revolution.

Music

The phases which the other arts traversed in the U.S.S.R. are less clearly reflected in music on account of its abstract character.

1 The painters Yakovlev, Grigoriev, Sorin, Shagal, Benoit, Somov, Korovin, Maliavin, etc., are living abroad.

However, one may notice even in this domain, at the present time, a certain movement towards the simplicity of classic traditions and towards folklore, while the research of new forms is being branded as "bourgeois aestheticism."

Soviet music cannot boast of any great achievement. The only Soviet musician to acquire a wide reputation outside the U.S.S.R. is Shostakovich, a composer of modernistic tendencies.[1] But his example in itself is a striking illustration of the relative character of the creative liberty granted by the Soviets to their artists in 1932. Following a performance of Shostakovich's opera, *Catherine Izmailova*, and of a ballet on the *kolkhoze* themes, likewise composed by him, the *Pravda*, official organ of the Communist Party, launched a veritable campaign against him, and since the beginning of 1936 has not ceased to accuse him of being nourished on bourgeois aestheticism. "This excessive subtility might cost him dear," says that paper. "Leftist distortions always come from the same source, whether in opera, painting, poetry, teaching or science. These petty bourgeois innovations lead to a severance from real art."[2] This article created a sensation. It was said to reflect the official doctrine, and even to have been inspired by Stalin in person, hence all loyal Soviet musicians hastened to express their agreement with it.[3]

The Sciences in U.S.S.R.

The representatives of scientific thought also had to pass through many ordeals under the Soviet régime.[4] It is indisputable that

1 The greatest of the contemporary Russian composers have preferred to reside abroad. This applies to Stravinsky, Rakhmaninov, Glazunov (recently deceased), Grechaninov, Medtner, Cherepnin, etc. Such was also the case with the great Russian singer Shaliapin.

2 *Pravda* January 28, 1936.

3 The attacks of which Shostakovich was the victim did not escape the attention of André Gide during his stay in the U.S.S.R. In this connection he told one of his Russian interlocutors: "You will drive all your artists to conformism . . . and the best, those who refuse to degrade their art or will not allow it to be subservient, will be reduced to silence. The culture you claim to serve, to illustrate, to defend, to glorify, will put you to shame." André Gide, *Back from the U.S.S.R.*, London, 1937, p. 76.

4 Of course one must not overlook the large number of Russian scholars who were obliged, under "war communism," to give up their scientific work for ever, either because they had been unable to withstand the material hardships and had succumbed to hunger and a multitude of other privations, or because they had been called upon to transfer their work to "Red" professors, hastily promoted for the purpose; or, again, because they had been imprisoned and exiled under the charge of attachment to the old régime. Even after the period of "war communism," Russian scholars and professors were more than once made the scape-

certain branches of science enjoy a privileged position in the U.S.S.R. This applies, in the first place, to those which can develop without coming in conflict with the famous *diamat* (dialectic materialism). This category includes mathematics, physics, chemistry, physiology, biology, economic geography, technology in the wider sense of the word, medicine, and finally archaeology and linguistics. It must be admitted, in fairness to the Soviet Government, that it has spared no expense in maintaining all sorts of institutes and encouraging scientific research work, which have often produced valuable results. Yet even in the domain of the exact sciences and engineering, there has been a considerable lowering of the standard as compared with pre-war times. The reason can be sought in the immoderate appetite shown by the Soviets for continual and ever-changing experiment in the methods of scientific teaching, which has led to disorganization of the higher schools.

As to the social sciences, these are practically condemned to sterility in the U.S.S.R., since no economic or sociologic study can proceed there unless it conforms strictly to the Marxist idea. Nor can philosophic thought manifest itself in the U.S.S.R., where it is officially recognized that the doctrine of materialism has completely and finally exhausted that subject. The whole vast study of jurisprudence has also been swept away, being regarded as a "bourgeois survival." When the universities were reorganized, the law faculties were the first to be suppressed.

It is, however, precisely in the domain of legal study that we may soon expect to witness a certain movement. The Soviet dictator seems disposed to-day to renounce the former Bolshevik theory which accepted the law merely as a matter of technical regulation. The new point of view has been embodied in a declaration by the Soviet Public Prosecutor, Vyshinsky, in which it is stated that the theories of Stuchka, Pashukanis, Hoichbarg, Reisner, Korovin, and other Soviet jurists whose authority was until recently considered beyond dispute, are "evil inventions by wreckers of the Trotskyist

goats of Soviet policy. In a number of so-called "sabotage" trials, highly competent technical experts have figured among the principal accused, on the pretext that they had deliberately failed to give production the speed-up demanded by the Government for the immediate industrialization of the country. Not a single case is known where a well-known accused person has been acquitted during these "sabotage trials." Yet, subsequently, the Government itself had to recognize the impractical exaggeration of the industrialization plans which it had originally laid down.

and Bukharinist type."[1] Vyshinsky asserts, further, that the law is not merely a technical regulation but a collection of general and obligatory rules governing human behaviour in society. However, notwithstanding all these statements, the principles of law are still far from having penetrated the life of the U.S.S.R.; there is not yet any sign of the birth of a really independent science of law. The adjustments now observed in this field will, at the best, result in attempts to subordinate the lower administrative organs to an observance of the principles of law, without in the least affecting the discretionary powers of the supreme authorities, least of all the power of the Leader himself.

It must finally be stated that the field of historical science has been profoundly upset under Bolshevik domination. It is true that the study of history has not been entirely nil. During recent years many new documents have been published in the U.S.S.R., principally relating to the development of the Russian social movement, and to the events of the last reign. Several interesting works have also appeared there, dealing with the history of Russian art and certain questions of detail on history in general. However, one can state without exaggeration that the Bolsheviks have wiped out historical research in the grand style, which combines a scrupulous scientific analysis of details with a no less scientific deduction on general lines. This branch of study has not yet been restored to favour. Constructive work of this kind dealing with the past of the Russian people always clashed with the same dialectic materialism scheme, the strict observance of which is compulsory in all fields, for Soviet research workers and explorers.

The Recent University Reform

After the accession of the Bolsheviks to power, their love for technic and their disregard for general culture led them to confine superior education to higher professional schools with narrowly specialized courses. The university reforms introduced in 1934 and 1935 resulted in the closing of these schools, in the reopening of the faculties. In Moscow and Leningrad, even the faculties of history were again opened. Academic degrees were restituted and the Communist Youth organizations were prohibited from interfering with

1 A. Vyshinsky, "Against the Anti-Marxist Theories of Law," *Pravda*, April 9, 1937. See also M. Iakovlev and G. Petrov, "Against the Bourgeois Theories of International Law," *Pravda*, April 27, 1937.

the management of the higher schools or with the teachings practised in them. These reforms will, in a certain measure, benefit university life, but it does not go so far as to restore to scientific study the essential prerequisite, namely, freedom of research. These university reforms have not removed the strict obligation existing in the U.S.S.R. to conform to an official ideology.

Scientific Thought and Compulsory Marxist Ideology

The French industrialist Ernest Mercier, whom we have mentioned several times in these pages, and who visited the U.S.S.R. at the end of 1935, could not help noticing the general low level of intellectual culture in the Soviet State. He explained it as follows: "We saw no evidence of what might be called a new aspect of eternal humanity, no hint of a new school of thought. One must admit that in itself this circumstance is in no way remarkable; rather would the contrary be a matter of surprise, for it would be the first time in the history of the human mind that the most complete and absolute suppression of liberty, both material and intellectual, had given birth to a new efflorescence of thought, other than among the elements of opposition to the régime, who of course, if they exist, are silent, and with good reason."[1] André Gide's conclusions are no less categoric: "We admire in the U.S.S.R. the extraordinary *élan* towards education—towards culture: but the only objects of this education are those which induce the mind to find satisfaction in the present circumstances . . . and culture is entirely directed along a single track. There is nothing disinterested in it . and it almost lacks the critical faculty. Criticism merely consists in asking oneself if this, that or the other is 'in the right line.' The line itself is never discussed . and woe to him who seeks to cross it."[2]

With these foreign judgments it is interesting to compare the

1 Ernest Mercier, *L'U.S.S.R.*, Paris, 1936, p. 89. See also in this connection the observations made by the American journalist W. H. Chamberlin: "The decimation of the old intelligentsia through emigration, through sabotage trials, through the removal of non-Marxist professors from many departments of teaching in the higher schools; the bringing in to the high schools and universities of a vast raw mass of students from families where there were no inherited habits of thought, study, and criticism; the harsh insistence, backed up not infrequently by administrative repression, that the 'Party line' must be the guiding rule in art and literature, as well as in politics and economics—all this tends to place on Soviet culture a stamp of dull uniformity, of unquestioning conformity to ideas and slogans which are handed down from above." (W. H. Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age*, Boston, 1934, pp. 287–288.)

2 Andre Gide, *Back from the U.S.S.R.*, London, 1937, p. 47.

opinion of the famous Russian physiologist, I. P. Pavlov, who died a short time ago. We know that up to the very last Pavlov was engaged in very important scientific work and that the Soviet Government never hesitated to furnish the funds necessary for his research. I. P. Pavlov was the scholar of whom the Soviets were the most proud before foreigners, although he had already enjoyed a world-wide reputation before the Revolution of November 1917, and although he openly and boldly criticized the Soviet régime up to the end of his splendid life. Bukharin, then an influential member of the Communist Party and of the Soviets, wrote in *Izvestia*: "Pavlov is entirely ours and we shall give him up to nobody."

In July 1934 H. G. Wells had occasion to discuss with Pavlov the cultural achievements of the Soviets, and reported on the conversation as follows: "He [Pavlov] talked indeed as no other man in Russia would be permitted to talk. So far, he said, the new régime had produced no results worth considering. It was still a large, clumsy experiment without proper controls. . . He delivered a discourse quite after my heart on the need for absolute intellectual freedom, if scientific progress, if any sort of progress, was to continue. And when I asked him what he felt about dialectical materialism, he exchanged derisive gestures with me, and left it at that."[1] Pavlov's great and universally acknowledged prestige, combined with his intimate knowledge of intellectual life in the U.S.S.R., lends particular weight to his words.

The School

The intellectual life of any country is intimately associated with the school. The decline of general culture in the U.S.S.R. is therefore in itself a disquieting symptom, bearing witness as it does to the obvious shortcomings of the Soviet educational policy.

Bolshevik leaders could not ignore the importance of this problem to their cause. When Lenin still had faith in the imminence of a world social revolution, he stated that: "The triumph of the Revolution can be consolidated only by the school. . . . The conquests of the Revolution will be rendered firm by the education of future generations."

First Scholastic Reforms

Accordingly the Soviet Government very soon undertook a radical reconstruction of the Russian school. In the "Statute

1 H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*.

governing the Single Labour School of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic" published at the beginning of the 1918–1919 scholastic year, several pages were devoted to setting forth the new educational principles and the new system of school organization. In his announcement serving as preface to this new statute the Commissar for Education, A. Lunacharsky, stated that "the bringing about of more or less normal conditions in the internal life of the school would lead to a general recasting, so vast that Russian school work would be brought into the first rank in the civilized world, at least so far as its underlying principles are concerned."

Utopian Period in Soviet School Policy

The statute in question outlined the organization of teaching as follows. From October 1918 all educational establishments were to pass under the control of the Commissariat for Education and be known (with the exception of the higher schools) as "Single Labour School." The single school was divided into two grades: the first taking care of children from eight to thirteen years of age, and the second having pupils from thirteen to seventeen. In both grades education was free, and the pupils in all schools were to receive free luncheon. Homework was abolished, as well as all examinations, whether entrance, year-end or graduation. Punishments were no longer permitted, and the administration of the school was placed in the hands of a "school collective" comprising all the pupils, teaching and other personnel (including caretakers) of each school, assisted by a "scholastic board" composed of the school personnel, representatives of the working population concerned, representatives of pupils from twelve years of age and over, and one representative of the local section of the Education Department.[1]

In 1927 the official organ, *Public Education,* attempted to sum up the results of all past activity of the Commissariat for Education, and divided it into three periods. The first ran from 1917 to the period of the *N.E.P.*, that is approximately to 1923–1924; the second commenced with the *N.E.P.* and extended to 1927; and the third began in 1927. To those three periods it is now necessary to

1 It was the intention of the authors of the "statute" that the school thus organized should replace the family in its relation to the children until the time, rapidly approaching, when all the children of the Republic would not only study together but live in common quarters arranged for them. One of the prominent and influential members of the Education Commission, Madame Menzhinskaia, even went so far as to state that "mere accident has placed the parents in a position to rule their children." (*Public Education,* 1919, No. 6–7, p. 173.)

add at least two more. Each of them started with recantations and denunciation of mistakes made, accompanied by radiant pictures of the future. No prospects were so bright as those painted at the beginning of the first period, and none ended in such utter failure.

Results of the First Period of Scholastic Policy

This first period may best be described by the term Utopian, which explains the setback met with by the Bolsheviks. The latter, in fact, had to surrender all their theoretic arguments as soon as they came in contact with the realities of life. By 1923 nothing remained of the "Statute governing the Single Labour School," except a collection of words without any real meaning. The "labour principle," soul of the new school,[1] "had degenerated into a mechanical employment without relation either to the productive work or the teaching."[2] In the general upheaval preceding the *N.E.P.*, there could not be serious question of compulsory and free instruction. At the Xth Congress of the Soviets, which was held at the end of 1922, Lunacharsky himself was forced to concede that the Soviet school was "traversing a catastrophic crisis . . . that it had no substantial foundation . that the reduction in the number of schools amounted to 45, 50, and even 60 per cent, according to the region . . . that the number of schools was already less than in 1914, and that the fall had not been checked. . . . We are at present completely disorganized. The staff of teachers is decimated by indescribable poverty, terrible mortality, sickness, and prostitution. . . . A teacher receives scarcely 12 per cent of the minimum, which itself cannot be regarded as sufficient for a working man, for it amounts to 2 roubles 90 kopecks in gold a month." And Lunacharsky concluded: "In short, our school is dying."[3]

1 The "statute" of 1918–1919 gave the following explanation of the meaning of the "labour principle" forming the basis of the school: "On the one hand, the child must assimilate all the matters taught while walking, collecting, drawing, photographing, modelling, sculpturing, doing cardboard work, taking care of plants, raising animals, and observing their life. On the other hand, the school must teach the pupils the trades of joiner and carpenter and instruct them in wood-carving, moulding, forging, casting, turning of metals, alloying, welding and boring work, leather treatment, printing, etc. In the village schools, the programme includes the teaching of agriculture. . . . The new school will be closely connected with local industrial production. Pupils will not be conducted to factories and workshops as excursionists, for curiosity, but to work in them."

2 Extract from a report presented to the First Congress of Education Workers held in Moscow in October 1921.

3 *Public Education*, 1923, No. 2, p. 13.

The actual balance sheet of the Soviet Single Labour School, as shown in figures, was much more tragic even than the words of the People's Commissar for Education suggested. In this connection, the periodical *Public Education*, published in Moscow, gave the following data for schools giving a general, non-specialized education:

Years	*Elementary Schools*	*Pupils*	*Secondary Schools*	*Pupils*
1915	122,123	8,146,637	3,700	410,000
1923	43,000	3,120,000	866	210,000

This situation was tantamount to a complete collapse of education in the U.S.S.R., the more so since the quality of the instruction provided was no less deplorable, according to Lunacharsky's own admission and to the evidence presented by the First Congress of Educational Workers. Under these conditions, the Soviet Government could only beat a retreat.[1] This coincided with the "pause" granted to the country by Lenin in the form of the *N.E.P.*

Soviet Schools Under the N.E.P.

The second phase of Soviet educational policy followed upon the collapse of the "labour school." It can best be defined as the professional school period, designed to serve the class policy of the Government and give the pupils a thoroughly Marxian general conception.

While the country was enjoying an economic interlude, the school was called upon to produce as quickly as possible a "shift of Communist workers" which in the future, when the period of "pause" was over, would lead forward the building up of Socialism. The dominant watchword at this stage was: "We do not need education without Communism." In new form, the Soviet Government thus continued to subject the Russian school to experiments solely based upon an abstract doctrinal idea.

The Statute of December 18, 1923, provided for the organization

1 This retreat, like all others, was enveloped in phraseology. But the collapse of the "Soviet Labour School" was so complete that the wording of the official statements could not conceal the profound disappointment at the result of the first period of school policy. "We are not renouncing our plan," Lunacharsky insisted. "We still have our guiding star, but we do not claim to reach the goal at the first attempt. . . . We have had a very painful setback. We must now make a fresh start and pursue more modest aims. But we have acquired an experience which teaches us not to rush ahead only with the strength of our enthusiasm."

of three types of school, each of which would train its pupils for a certain professional career. Those who graduated from the first-grade school (four years' course) passed into the elementary professional school, the first cycle of which (three years' course) opened the doors of the technical schools, and the second cycle (two years' course) those of the higher technical schools and universities. Under this scheme, general culture of the mind and general instruction were relegated to the background and stress laid upon technical professional education. Non-specialized instruction was limited to the first-grade schools (elementary) and to the first cycle of the medium (secondary) school, that is to say, to a total period of seven years schooling. Thus at fifteen years of age, the pupils had completed their general studies.

Education by the Method of "Complexes"

However, what was most original in the Soviet educational policy was not the predominance of professional education over general instruction: it was, in particular, the "class" character of the school, inasmuch as only the children of workers and of Soviet functionaries were admitted, and secondly, the system of teaching.

In order to impart a strictly Marxist character to general education, the school programmes of 1923 departed completely from the "bourgeois traditions."[1] The subjects taught were no longer divided into the usual categories (languages, history, mathematics, geography, etc.), but grouped into combined themes, known as "complexes" answering the needs of "Socialist education."[2]

1 Art. 35 of the 1923 statute stated: "The whole work in the school and the entire organization of its life must help the pupils to develop their proletarian consciousness and instincts, to realize the solidarity of all workers in their struggle against capital, as well as to render them useful in the field of industrial production and that of social and political activity."

2 During the first year's schooling, the theme "The toiling life of a family in a village and in an urban district" furnished one of these "complexes"; during the second year, "Toiling life of the villages and of the urban districts" furnished another; during the third, "Economy of the region" where the school was situated; during the fourth (and let us remember that this applied to children of eleven to twelve), "The economy of the Soviet Republic and other States." In second-grade schools (fifth year of schooling) the "complex" was "Agriculture, its aspects, its forms." The eighth year of schooling covered "History of labour," and the ninth year "The scientific organization of labour." The programme specified that each of these different subjects must be studied from every angle, and since they could be approached in a great variety of ways, the programme endeavoured, in a certain measure, to systematize the methods of teaching. For this purpose, it was provided that the material connected with a given "complex" should be

Under this system of training, the usual school subjects, the native tongue, mathematics, history, etc., were regarded merely as auxiliaries serving to illustrate the fundamental theme, and were touched upon merely to the extent necessary to an understanding of the latter. To be able to read, write, and add up were considered as "gestures" to which the pupils were progressively made accustomed during their study of the fundamental "labour theme."[1]

At the beginning of 1926 Lunacharsky still attached great importance to the new education plans, and deemed them "an immense jump ahead." The leaders of the Communist Party had for some time hoped that the new school would prepare a "new human material." In 1925, during the XIVth Congress of the Party, Bukharin had affirmed: "The fate of the Revolution at present depends upon the extent to which we are able to make of the young generation a human material capable of building up the socialist economy and establishing a communist society."

In what measure were the hopes placed by the Bolshevik leaders on the educational reform of 1923 realized?

Quantitative Progress of the Schools under the N.E.P.

The development of educational work involves two separate problems, which should not be confused: that of quantity and that of quality. From the quantitative point of view, the second period of the Soviet educational policy unquestionably proved much more successful than the first. It is true the rate of advance in the number of schools was still far behind that of the pre-war period, but the absolute figure was already approaching the 1914 level.

divided into three separate "columns" entitled: the middle one "Labour"; the left-hand one, "Nature"; the right-hand one, "Society." In the example of the complex "Toiling life in the village and in an urban district," the left-hand column included "The Four Seasons of the Year," and that of the right "The Family and the School." The complex "Economy of the Soviet Republic" included, in the left-hand column, "Geography of the Soviet Republic and other countries; life of the human body"; in the right-hand column, "The political organization of the Soviet Republic and other countries, and pictures of the history of mankind," etc. In addition to the subjects indicated above, a number of others had to be studied in the schools, preferably connected with events and great men of the Soviet State. Thus the theme "Lenin and the children" served as pretext to the teaching of the most varied subjects.

1 "The learning of these 'gestures' " announced the Plan of 1923, "should not occupy special lessons, nor assume the form of separate exercises. The pupils will have to assimilate them, incidentally, during study of the above enumerated elements."

The number of pupils was even already exceeding that of 1914. Thus the school years of 1925–1926 saw the number of schools reach 95 per cent of the 1914 figure, and the number of pupils increase to 130 per cent as compared with that latter year.

For the school years of 1928–1929 the number of schools of the first and second grade and the number of their pupils are shown in the following table, based on figures given by the People's Commissariat for Education:[1]

School Categories	*Number of Schools*	*Number of Pupils*
Elementary Schools	115,500	8,898,300
Secondary Schools—		
With incomplete seven-year course ..	7,100	2,200,100
With complete nine-year course	1,800	976,400
Total	124,400	12,074,800

To these general educational institutions—or, as they were officially called, schools of Socialist education—must be added the elementary and secondary professional schools of various kinds. The scholastic census taken on December 15, 1927, showed 6,309 establishments of this character, totalling 838,968 pupils.

Since the *N.E.P.*, the elementary and secondary schools have unquestionably increased in quantity, which has permitted the Soviet Government to attack the problem of introducing compulsory elementary education for all children. This principle had been proclaimed more than once since the November Revolution, but it was not until 1925 that the Government passed from words to acts, and ordered compulsory and universal elementary education in all the Republics within the U.S.S.R.

Under the old régime, the systematic generalization of elementary education, initiated in 1908, was to be completed, according to plan, by 1923.[2] Thus the Revolution retarded its realization by several years, since the 1925 plans did not anticipate its accomplishment until 1934–1935.

Quality of Instruction in Soviet Schools under the N.E.P.

If we now examine the quality of Soviet schools, the impression gained as to the years 1923 to 1927 immediately becomes more unfavourable. Those in charge of the Soviet educational policy had to admit themselves, in 1926, that their hopes were shattered. The

1 *Building up of Socialism*, Moscow, 1936, p. 557.
2 See p. 16.

1923 plans, in fact, led to a deplorable situation. "In our schools," writes *Public Education* (1926, No. 1), "the teaching is absolutely worthless, whether it is a question of learning to read, write, and count, or a question of acquiring the general part of the programme: elementary knowledge of the structure of society, natural science, geography, physics, mathematics, etc. This defect is common both to the elementary and higher-grade schools." In the villages the peasants complained: "No matter how much trouble the teacher takes, the children do not learn to read, write, and count. . . . In the old days they learned better and more quickly."[1] In the second-grade schools, the "complex" method and the teaching of the Marxian ideology and the principles of the class struggle brought about a catastrophic situation which produced lamentable results in the entrance examinations to the higher schools.[2] Lunacharsky was forced to recognize: "We have not yet succeeded in finding a compromise between our ideas concerning the Communist school as it should be, and the environment in which it must be constructed. We still continue to aim too high."

The Government endeavoured to convert the school into an instrument for "State propaganda of Communism" in the interest of the building up of Socialism. It was the pupils of the Soviet schools who paid the price of this experiment by receiving nothing but an extremely incomplete and superficial teaching wholly bereft of system. In fact, they had to be satisfied with bits of teaching.

A complete course of study in an average Soviet secondary school would certainly not permit the student to follow courses in a European higher-grade school. Moreover, the question does not arise in practice, for the European universities consider the Soviet school

1 *The Public Teacher*, 1926, No. 2.

2 J. Perelman, well-known physicist of Leningrad, has related in the *Red Journal* (No. 1205) his impressions as an examiner in a technical school. "I had to examine pupils in physics and mathematics. The requirements were reduced to a minimum, but we had to lessen them still further for fear of rejecting practically all the candidates and being unable to fill the vacancies. And yet, for instance, for the electrotechnical school there were 800 candidates and 50 vacancies. . . . The greatest and most serious defect among the pupils is their inability to make practical use of mathematics. It would appear as if the pupils in our schools only receive a general idea of the essence of mathematics, that they do not familiarize themselves with it, do not master it." In the matter of humanities, it was even worse. The official report on the entrance examinations to the higher schools in 1927 stated that the candidates gave proof of "such complete indifference to the structure of society that the saddest reflections were justified."

education absolutely inadequate and do not recognize its diplomas. On the contrary, prior to the Revolution, the Russian diploma of secondary education readily opened the doors of all European universities and other superior educational institutions, where many Russians used often to complete their studies even after having finished their course in Russian universities. To-day this precious intellectual intercourse has been broken off. Indeed, it would not even be tolerated by the masters of present-day Russia.

The 1927 Education Plan

The statute of 1923 manifestly caused the destruction of the very foundations of school education. In 1927 it was decided to abandon it. The new plans, drawn up for 1927–1928, accordingly renounced the strict application of the "complex" method, restored the teaching of the usual subjects (mathematics, physics, natural history, native tongue, social science), and fixed the number of hours to be devoted to them in the fifth, sixth, and seventh school years. But this partial adjustment could not produce any remarkable results.

Nor did it last long. At the moment when the new school plans came into force, the *N.E.P.* was passing away. The Stalin First Five-Year Plan very soon submitted the unhappy Soviet school to new changes.

The School During Stalin's First Five-Year Plan

Stalin's Five-Year Plan imposed requirements upon the school the serious nature of which can be plainly seen in the fact that no less than 176,000 engineers and 260,000 technicians were demanded for industry, and 450,000 specialists, including 90,000 with higher school diplomas for the collective farms. Industrialization at the same time demanded the immediate "purging" from the schools of all elements "socially alien to Communism." The previous rate of progress in schooling facilities, and the whole scholastic system, were deemed incapable of realizing this programme, and in fact Lunacharsky himself, until that time the immovable head of the public education system (as Commissar for Education of the R.S.F.S.R.), was regarded as insufficiently energetic to meet the situation.

The summer of 1929 witnessed the triumph of the new educational schemes, dictated by the policy of collectivization and super-industrialization. The school plans of 1927 were denounced as a compromise with the *kulaks* and their authors were declared suspect of *Menshevik* "opportunism." In September 1929 Lunacharsky had to give up his post to A. Bubnov. As the latter expressed it in characteristic terms, the schoolmaster, in exercising his activities, had to remember that he stood on "the most sensible point of the class-struggle, on the intersection between the past and the present, between the activities of the *kulak* and the *nepman* (profiteer of the *N.E.P.*) and the Socialist proletarian activity." The official organ of the department of education stated at that time: "Schoolmasters must be imbued to the backbone with the ideas of the Five-Year Plan and the frenzied rush of Socialist development." The new Commissar for Education, in his relations with the teaching personnel, addressed them exclusively in military language. The main aims now were to "make the educational workers adopt the rhythm of battle," to "transform the sections of the Teachers' Union into military staffs," to "mobilize the masses of educational workers in order to overcome the difficulties of Socialist construction." Teachers received orders to go to the masses "in a spirit of Socialist emulation" and to "purge their own ranks" of the elements which "break the line of the proletarian class."

Strong Government Pressure on the School

Since the November 1917 Revolution, education had never been so brutally subjected to the Soviet policy. Under the Stalin Five-Year Plan, teaching was decreed to be "an indispensable link in the indivisible process of Socialist reorganization." For this reason the Government devoted all its energy to filling the schools—both as to the staff of teachers and the pupils—with social elements in sympathy with "Socialist principles."[1]

In all fairness to Bubnov it must be admitted that he succeeded

1 For the school year 1930–1931, for instance, the following "social norms of admission" were instituted in respect to the status of the pupil's parents: "In the higher technical schools: 70 per cent of workers; in the higher agricultural schools: 75 per cent of workers and *kolkhozian* peasants; in the higher schools of social economics: 60 per cent; in the art schools: 50 per cent; in the training colleges: 40 per cent of workers and 20 per cent of peasants." These figures are the compulsory minima.

in increasing the number of schools in comparison with the *N.E.P.* period. The official school statistics for boys and girls indicate the progress in this connection as follows:[1]

	Elementary Schools		*Secondary Schools*		*Total Number*
School Years	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*of Pupils*
1929–1930	122,900	9,951,200	9,700	3,552,500	13,503,700
1930–1931	139,600	13,100,300	13,000	4,555,900	17,656,200
1931–1932	145,400	13,772,000	21,800	7,074,200	20,846,200

Such were the numerical results, certainly impressive, achieved by means of the strong pressure applied to the school during the period of intense industrialization.

Introduction of Compulsory Elementary Education

Apart from this quantitative success appearing from sovietic statistics, another striking achievement must be mentioned. In the autumn of 1931 the Central Committee of the Party solemnly announced that the "cultural campaign" which had just come to a close had resulted in the problem of compulsory elementary education having been solved and a four-year course being secured to all children. Two or three years had therefore been gained on the periods of time provided for in 1925.

However, the question of general education permits, perhaps better than any other educational problem in the U.S.S.R., to gauge to what extent the increase in the number of schools was attained at the cost of lowering the standard of teaching[2]. The Central Committee of the Communist Party itself had to concede that the Soviet school, particularly in the country districts, at the beginning of 1930, had only a distant resemblance to an educational organization worthy of the name.

Further Lowering of Quality in Elementary and Secondary Instruction. Period of the Second Plan

When, before the Revolution, compulsory education for all children began to be introduced systematically, the remarkable progress which was then attained in the scholastic system was accompanied by the parallel creation of the necessary equipment and by the simul-

1 *Building up of Socialism*, 1936, p. 557.

2 At the beginning of the cultural campaign of the Stalin era, the introduction of compulsory education for all children was contemplated, with a seven-year course of study. However, all efforts on the part of the Soviet Government proved incapable of pushing the realization of this plan beyond the elementary schools with a four years' course.

taneous training of a staff of teachers, duly prepared and adequate in number. In other words, the introduction of compulsory education was regarded at that time as a combined problem of quantity and quality. The Soviet Government approached the question from quite another angle. The "cultural campaign" of 1930–1931 decreed immediate compulsory education, without greatly concerning itself with precise practical plans for the extension of the school system, nor even with the actual state of the latter.

Those in charge of the Soviet educational policy had overlooked one essential thing: that notwithstanding the real and substantial success obtained in the multiplication of schools, the annual increase in their number was in 1932 slower than it had been before the War, and that under these circumstances the schools of the U.S.S.R. could not actually accommodate all the children whose attendance had become "compulsory" by virtue of the new legal regulations.[1]

According to the most recent Soviet information, teaching in 90 per cent of the elementary schools covers three shifts of pupils, each of which can only occupy the premises for three hours. Moreover, the same sources indicate that the elementary schools do not possess more than 30 per cent of the lesson books, exercise books, and other supplies they need.

At the time when compulsory education was introduced, the elementary schools were already overcrowded. With time, the shortage of schools became worse, since there has been no increase in premises from 1932 to 1935, whereas the number of children of school age has naturally increased from year to year, as shown by the following figures:[2]

	Elementary Schools		*Secondary Schools*		*Total Number*
School Years	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*of Pupils*
1932–1933	138,700	12,633,600	28,500	9,179,900	21,813,500
1933–1934	135,400	12,035,600	31,300	9,968,000	22,003,600
1934–1935	127,800	11,100,300	34,000	12,330,400	23,555,800
1935–1936	125,800	10,890,600	37,400	14,490,400	25,515,100
1936–1937		10,770,000		17,872,000	28,842,000

1 In Russia the birth-rate increases the number of children of school age by about two millions a year. The rational development of the school system must take this fact into consideration. Pre-revolution plans provided that the introduction of compulsory education should go hand in hand with the realization, in each territorial unit, of the requisite conditions—adequate buildings, class equipment, teaching personnel—not only for its initial number of pupils but for its subsequent increase.

2 *Building up of Socialism*, Moscow, 1937, p. 557. In 1935–1936 out of the secondary schools 31,400 of them (with 10,023,200 pupils) had an incomplete seven-years' course, and 6,000 (with 4,467,200 pupils) had a complete ten-years' course,

In regard to the teaching personnel, the situation in the U.S.S.R. is likewise far from satisfactory. According to very recent Soviet data, only 40 per cent of the elementary school teachers had even taken the incomplete course of the secondary school, covering a period of seven years, and more than 10 per cent never went beyond the elementary school, that is to say, the school in which they are called upon to teach. These teachers need to complete their own education seriously, and yet the authorities demand that they devote 70 per cent of their energy to "social work" instead of concentrating entirely on their profession. Moreover, teachers are very ill-paid. One can therefore appreciate the reasons why they abandon their work at the first opportunity and accept any other kind of job, if only that of bookkeeper in a *kolkhoze*.

If such was the position in elementary schools, the Stalin Five-Year Plan produced in secondary education similar results: the quality of teaching showed a distinct drop, although here the number of schools and of pupils increased. Even to-day the U.S.S.R. has not succeeded in remedying this situation.

According to recent official sources, 70 per cent of the secondary schools cover three shifts and 30 per cent two shifts. They are even less well equipped with the indispensable books and supplies than the elementary schools. The staff of teachers includes 40 per cent of persons who themselves have never had an education beyond the secondary stage. This latter circumstance did not, however, cause much concern to the Commissar for Education, Bubnov. He insisted, first of all, that the secondary school teacher be "thoroughly familiarized with the Marxist ideology," and that he have the moral force to resist "the terror of the class in process of disappearance."

No wonder, then, that even after the replacement of Lunacharsky, official reports testify to the deplorably low standard of knowledge displayed by the pupils on leaving the secondary school.[1]

The responsible leaders of the Soviet school policy in the U.S.S.R.

a tenth year having been added in 1932–1933 to the complete secondary schools. In 1936–1937 high-grade schools numbered 542,000 students. According to *Pravda* (November 24, 1936), at the beginning of 1936, in addition to "schools of general education" there were 1,797 schools for industrial apprentices, 2,571 technical schools (technicums), 716 workers' faculties, and 595 high-grade schools. In 1936–1937 the total number of pupils in all educational institutions taken together was 38,355,000. (*Twenty Years of Soviet Power*, 1937, p. 81.)

1 The admission of candidates to the technical schools gave rise, in 1931, to the following official comments: "Information received from a number of technical schools indicates that neither the amount nor the quality of knowledge of the newly admitted candidates meets the minimum requirements. They have often

were finally constrained to take heed of the sad results of the "cultural campaign," for the latter had ended in a collapse of the school comparable to that previously produced by the 1923 plans. However, the new drop in quality of the teaching became even more flagrant by reason of the numerical progress recorded on preceding pages. In vain did the Bolshevik leaders attribute exceptional importance to the rational organization of education; since the Revolution, the latter had passed through a long period of martyrdom. The educational policy of the Soviets has never been anything more than a succession of Utopian plans in which the real interests of learning were regularly sacrificed to the needs of Communist propaganda.

More Recent Attempts by the Soviet Government to Raise the Quality of the School

It is very difficult to determine at this time what results will crown the Government's recent efforts to raise the educational standard. Whatever they may be, one can safely say that the U.S.S.R. now lacks the elements which would, in the years to come, enable it to bring the Soviet school up to a level anywhere near that of elementary and secondary education in the European countries. In other words, the immediate prospects in this domain can hardly be considered brilliant.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that the Government is making noteworthy efforts to raise the standard of teaching in the U.S.S.R. In this direction, certain measures have been applied since 1932, though they were not systematized until 1934–1935.

During the autumn of 1932 the multiple experiments made in the field of educational programmes were repudiated as being "Leftist deviations" and "concealed Trotskyism." The doctrine that "the lesson is the fundamental unit of scholastic teaching" was restored, together with the idea of "the master's directing role"; pupils were again distributed into classes instead of, as formerly, into "groups" and "mobile brigades"; time-tables were restored, severe discipline established, together with punishments and even the expelling of culprits. In short, Soviet education returned to all that had previously been denounced as "bourgeois survivals" or "the attributes of a school developed under the abnormal conditions of the

been found incapable of dealing with simple or decimal fractions, of using algebraic formulae, of making equations, and of solving problems. . . . In physics and chemistry the situation is no more satisfactory. As to the Russian language, they are almost illiterate: spelling mistakes abound; in the oral and written language the pupils have shown their ignorance both of grammar and style."

capitalist régime." At the same time, the teaching of various subjects formerly eliminated came back into favour. Thus, in the spring of 1934, the teaching of history and geography, suppressed after the Bolshevik Revolution, was resumed.

New "Stabilized" Plans of Education

Finally, the autumn of 1934 witnessed the publication of "stabilized plans of education" strangely resembling the plans of education existing in bourgeois countries. Of all the old subjects, the Soviet school henceforth only eliminates religion and dead languages. Two hours a week are set aside, in the higher class, for "history of the Communist Party" and one hour a week, in the five intermediary classes, for "the structure of society." This is all that survives, in the new teaching plans, of the old tendency to substitute "proletarian" subjects for "bourgeois" studies.

The new plans announced that the primary aim of the school was to inculcate knowledge, and that the pupil's "socially productive role" was to be entirely subordinated to that. In accordance with this viewpoint, the statute governing pupils' organizations, published in January 1935, declared that the latter must "aid the staff of teachers to improve the result of studies and to consolidate a discipline freely accepted." After having stabilized the programmes, steps were taken toward "stabilizing" the textbooks. Many authors who had theretofore enjoyed official protection learned with consternation that their school books had now been declared "Leftist" and that they must publicly confess their errors. Such was, among others, the case of Bukharin.

Of course the new textbooks, like all their predecessors, vaunt the merits of the Soviet system and those of the "genial leader," Stalin, but they nevertheless take care to set forth the subject taught in a systematic and easily assimilated fashion; as, for example, the *Abridged Course of the U.S.S.R. History*, composed by Professor Shestakov and approved by the "Pan-Unionist Government Commission," which was published in the autumn of 1937. Much less a school textbook than a work of political propaganda, it is manifestly inspired, above all, by the desire to glorify the "leader of peoples," the "great" Stalin. And, yet, this book marks an undeniable progress as compared with those heretofore placed in the hands of children. In it, the pre-Soviet past of the Russian people is no longer presented in uniformly dark colours. The adoption of Christianity is represented here as constituting a certain progress,

homage is rendered by the book to the historic role of Alexander Nevsky, who broke the advance of the Teuton knights, and to the national sentiment of the Russian people which more than once rose in defence of its soil. But the biased character of the teaching becomes more and more pronounced as the book reaches modern times and present events. In this course, the events of the Paris Commune of 1871 become an integral part of Russian history, and the pupils learn to scorn the "traitors" and "wreckers" Trotsky, Rykov, and Bukharin. To sum up, it can be said that this textbook seeks simultaneously to serve distinctly different causes: the doctrine of Karl Marx, Russian nationalism, and the ambitions of Stalin.

Speedy Retreat from the Old Positions in School Policy

When they found themselves obliged to abandon the principles they had formerly defended in educational matters, the Soviet leaders, in changing their policy, went so far as to restore, by the Government decree of September 1, 1935, the system of marks given to pupils, quarterly reports to be delivered to parents and signed by them, year-end examinations for admission to a higher class, and even the wearing of uniforms by pupils of secondary and even elementary schools.

All these measures, and other similar ones, mark an unquestionable return to the old traditions of education. The confusion created by the downfall of teaching appears to be so profound that, in order to end it, the recent regulations have perhaps gone farther than was really called for by the situation. It may be permitted to wonder, not without misgiving, whether in its new zeal the Soviet Government will not transform the elementary and secondary educational establishments into a species of military barracks.

Possibly the new arrangements bring a certain improvement to the school system. But it is no less true that the latter will continue to suffer from the yoke which bears down upon all manifestations of the mind in the U.S.S.R. To the questions that interest him, a pupil there may never receive any other explanation than that set forth in the works of Marx–Engels–Lenin–Stalin. If the Soviets have finally decided to acknowledge the principle of devoting the school solely to education, they appear to have done so only because they now have available a large number of teachers with a proper training in Bolshevik ideology. This enabled them to relieve the schools from teaching the famous "political ABC." The Soviet leaders hope, in fact, that though lessons in this catechism have been officially

abolished, it will in reality remain the background of all education. It is, of course, premature to estimate in what measure events will justify this expectation.

The Fundamental Error in the Soviet School Policy

Be that as it may, all these recent improvements will be incapable of actually regenerating the Sovietic school, by reason of the single fact that a sole and compulsory general conception is imposed upon all citizens, and necessarily warps the very basis of teaching. Perhaps in course of time the Soviet school will find itself in a position to offer its pupils a standard of learning more or less equal to the material progress of "bourgeois science," but what it will be powerless to give them is culture of mind. It is condemned to drill the mind and not develop it. Therein lies, at bottom, the initial cause of all the ordeals the Soviet school has had to endure for the past twenty years, culminating in the terrifying fall of general culture in the country. André Gide rightly remarks, on the basis of his personal observations: "In the U.S.S.R. everybody knows beforehand, once and for all, that on any and every subject there can only be one opinion. . . . So that every time you talk to one Russian, you feel as if you are talking to them all." This results in a suppression of any original personality, which leads Gide to the saddest conclusion: "Nothing is a greater danger to culture than such a frame of mind."[1]

In the U.S.S.R., intellectual life cannot breathe. All ventilators have been carefully closed there. The Soviet citizen is condemned to live in a morally stuffy atmosphere, all the more unbreathable in that the Government systematically applies a high pressure to it.

General Inference on Cultural Life

In the cultural sphere, therefore, the Bolshevik experiments have produced the same consequences as those recorded in the foregoing pages in the economic and social domains, namely: a marked reduction in the common patrimony, the disappearance of national capital, both material and moral, through senseless waste.

Sooner or later the country will find itself obliged to seek a way out of the painful situation created by reckless industrialization, forced collectivization of the countryside, and subjugation of all intellectual life to "the building up of socialism." It will have to solve all the complicated and tangled problems resulting from universal enslavement.

1 André Gide, *Back from the U.S.S.R.*, pp. 45 and 48.

Conclusion

Official Soviet Point of View on the U.S.S.R. Régime

At the VIIth World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in August 1935, a number of speakers referred to "the definite and irrevocable victory won by Socialism in the country of the Soviets." D. Manuilsky, the principal reporter, began his address with the following words: "Between the VIth[1] and VIIth Congresses of the Communist International, an event of capital importance in the life of the nations has taken place: the definite and irrevocable victory won by Socialism in the U.S.S.R. After the great Socialist Revolution of November 1917, this is the second crushing victory of the working class over world capitalism, a victory that has inaugurated a new era in the history of mankind."[2]

A little over a year after these international sessions, at the moment of submitting to the VIIIth Pan-Union Congress of the Soviets the draft of his Constitution, Stalin himself declared that the most important Soviet achievements, "during the period from 1924 to our days," was "the fact of having conquered Socialism." "For the U.S.S.R.," said the Soviet dictator emphatically, "Socialism is something that has already been obtained and conquered. . . Our society has succeeded in realizing the essential foundations of Socialism, in creating the Socialist régime, that is to say, in constructing what the Marxists describe in other terms as the initial or primary form of Communism. . . The fundamental principle of this stage of Communism is, as we know, expressed in the formula:

1 The VIth Congress of the Communist International was held in August and September 1928.

2 D. Z. Manuilsky, *The Results of the Building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1935. In complete accord with the fundamental theses contained in Manuilsky's report, the Congress adopted the following motion: "The VIIth World Congress of the Communist International records with deep satisfaction the definite and irrevocable victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the consolidation, in every respect, of the proletarian dictatorship, achieved under the leadership of the Pan-Union Communist Party, as a result of Socialist reconstruction of the national economy, of collectivization, of ousting of capitalist elements, and of liquidation of the *kulaks* as a class." (*Resolutions of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1935.)

'From each according to his capacity; to each according to his labour.' "

The official point of view on the results of the Soviet experiment is thus set forth very clearly and precisely. Now that Stalin, supreme chief of the Communist Party and responsible author of all recent Soviet "accomplishments," has himself recognized that Socialism already exists in the U.S.S.R., no further doubt can be expressed on the subject, either orally or in writing, throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Stalin admits, it is true, that "Soviet society has not yet reached the highest degree of Communism, where the principle 'from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs' will be applied." This supreme stage still lies ahead, but it is the goal towards which every effort must be strained. Notwithstanding all his official optimism, Stalin has been unable to indicate, however approximately, the moment when this supreme phase may be brought about.[1] In any case, what has been achieved in the U.S.S.R. represents, to his mind, the greatest conquest in the history of the world. Hence the Constitution of 1936, "a summing up as to the road already covered, a summing up of conquests achieved," is "an historic document treating of the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. . . . This document attests that what has been and still is the dream of millions of honest people in capitalist countries, has become a reality in the U.S.S.R."

Soviet citizens, obviously, have no right to question the actual

1 The opinion expressed by Stalin concerning the two phases of Communism closely resembles what Lenin said in 1917 in his book *The State and the Revolution* (see above, p. 125), which was intended to serve as a political complement to the doctrine of Karl Marx. According to Lenin, Marx and his disciples were wrong in considering that the complete disappearance, "the death," of the State must occur fairly rapidly after the assumption of political power by the proletariat. Lenin, on the contrary, teaches that "the initial, primary phase of Communist society" will still endure long after the Revolution, when "the means of production shall have ceased to be the private property of individuals"; during this primary phase, "bourgeois law" will be suppressed only with respect to the means of production, but will still act "as a regulator (determinator) of the distribution of products and labour." At that stage, "the decay of the State will not yet be complete, for it will still have to ensure 'bourgeois law,' consecrating the inequality which will then still exist in fact." The total "decay" of the State will only take place after the complete realization of Communism, when everyone will receive what he requires "according to his needs." In the course of lectures he gave in April 1924 at the Sverdlov University, and in which he explained to his audience the posthumous lessons of Lenin, Stalin taught that the transition from the initial, primary phase of Communism to the higher, complete phase "constitutes an entire historical epoch." (Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 24-33.)

realization of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. under pain of being accused of "deviation of thought," a serious crime against the State; but doubts of this character have been expressed a number of times—and in presence of Stalin himself—by persons whose fate did not depend upon his unbounded arbitrary will.

Roy Howard, representative of the American United Press, was able to interview Stalin in March 1936. He asked him if it would not be nearer the truth to describe the régime of the U.S.S.R. as "State Socialism" where "individual liberty is violated and other deprivations take place in the interest of the State." Of course, Stalin did not accept this method of presenting the problem. "We have not yet constructed Communist society," he replied. "To construct such a society is no easy task. You are aware, of course, of the difference existing between Socialist and Communist society. In the first, one still finds inequalities of fortune. . In Socialist society, while each person is obliged to work, remuneration is not fixed according to the needs of each, but according to the quantity and quality of the work furnished; therefore the salary—unequal, differential—continues to be applied there. Only when we have succeeded in creating an order permitting men to receive from society, in exchange for their labour, not according to the quantity and quality of the work done, but according to their needs, will it be possible to say that we have established a Communist society." Nevertheless, Stalin added, "the society created by us can by no means be qualified as 'State Socialism.' Our Soviet society is Socialist because private ownership of factories, workshops, land, banks, and means of transport, has been abolished, and replaced by collective ownership. On the contrary, in the systems that one might be allowed to regard as State Socialist systems, only a certain part of the wealth—sometimes a fairly large part—passes into the hands of the State or under its control, while in the overwhelming majority of cases, the ownership of workshops, factories, and land, remains in the hands of private individuals."[1]

Real Nature of the Soviet Order: State Capitalism

However, the very distinct impression derived from Stalin's words is exactly the contrary of what the Soviet dictator wished his American interviewer to believe. We are compelled to infer that

1 *Lenin and Stalin on the Soviet Constitution.* Collection of articles, speeches, and documents, Moscow, 1936, pp. 176–177.

one of these "systems generally considered as State Socialism" has been realized in the U.S.S.R. with the maximum fullness and method. It may be that, like Lenin, Stalin is very sincerely dreaming of the distant day when a real Socialist régime will be set up in Russia. As to the present time, the régime existing in the U.S.S.R. is still infinitely far from the "initial, primary phase" of Socialism, and it was certainly not an idle question which Howard posed to Stalin in speaking of "State Socialism."

It is not society, but the State, which in the U.S.S.R. owns all the means and instruments of production. The Government authorities alone have the right to use these means and instruments and actually dispose of them. At the same time, the Government exercises a veritable economic dictatorship over the whole country. State organs dictate the plans, in all branches of the national economy. And, by its very nature, the State, which autocratically rules the destinies of the vast country, answers perfectly to the description given by Lenin in his book *The State and the Revolution*, in which he terms the State "a central organization of violence and oppression." The despotic régime solidly installed in the country represents the ransom the population of the U.S.S.R. has to pay for Soviet accomplishments. If the Bolshevik Government has been able to proceed with its experiments, it has been able to do so only by involving the country in the frightful labyrinth of civil war horrors, bloody repressions of peasant risings, terror and concentration camps, typhus, scurvy, and famine, and all the excesses of forced collectivization; reviving mediaeval inquisition methods, trials and the taking of hostages; suppressing by violence the last vestige of individual liberty; and, finally, by turning the population of the U.S.S.R. into human dust.

The new Soviet Constitution, solemnly adopted on December 5, 1936, by the VIIIth Pan-Union Congress of the Soviets, peremptorily declares, it is true, that "all power in the U.S.S.R. belongs to the workers of town and country"; but it is precisely on this point that the chasm between the official ideology and everyday reality has always been particularly clear since the birth of the Soviet régime. In the state of affairs created in Russia since the November Revolution, that immense country is governed by a handful of social experimenters. The latter have nothing but distrust and apprehension for the people, for the great working masses, for their spirit of social initiative, for their political sense. Since the régime came into

existence, the intelligence and the will of millions of "workers of town and country" have had no part in the real administration of the country. Even the high dignitaries of the U.S.S.R. have, with time, become blind executors of the will of Stalin, the omnipotent dictator. The new Constitution can have no other effect than to further reinforce the power of the "chief" in the country and in the Communist Party.

More than any other régime, "State Socialism," in its systematic application, reserves all the real advantages to those who govern, those who are in a position to say: "*L'État, c'est moi.*" In the U.S.S.R. these words can be pronounced without contest only by the representatives of the governing class which has managed to constitute itself, and which effectively directs all economic, administrative and cultural life of the country, by sharing among its members all the advantages of power. It is for them that, thanks to Stalin, life has in fact become "more gay" of late. For the mass of toiling millions, the State mechanism represents primarily an apparatus of constraint, whose grip pursues them everywhere, and which the reigning oligarchy never ceases to use for the purpose of exploiting them to its own profit, often in absolutely pre-capitalist forms. Contrary to the solemn and categoric declarations of Soviet chiefs, such an order certainly in no way merits to be called Socialist. When he announced to the VIIth World Congress of the Communist International the definite triumph of Socialism, Manuilsky stated in support of his thesis that in Soviet Russia "man is the forger of his destiny, sovereign master of the Socialist machine"; that, contrary to the régime of capitalist countries, in Russia "man is not the manure of history, . . . the slave building the Egyptian pyramids; he is not an attribute of the capitalist machine, condemned to provide a carefree existence for a handful of parasites; not the object of slavery exploitation or feudal bondage."[1] For the edification of the population of the U.S.S.R., the authorities have had hundreds of thousands of copies of this speech distributed. Many readers of this criticism of the "capitalist régime," this hymn to the "Socialist accomplishments" of the U.S.S.R., must have recognized themselves in "the slave building the Egyptian pyramids."

In this connection Trotsky wrote as follows: "The higher the Soviet State rises above the people, and the more fiercely it opposes itself as the guardian of property to the people as its squanderer, the

1 Manuilsky, *The Results of the Building up of Socialism*, Moscow, 1935.

more obviously does it testify against the Socialist character of this State property." "The transfer of the factories to the State changed the situation of the workers only juridically." "With piecework payment, hard conditions of material existence, lack of free movement (with terrible police repression penetrating the life of every factory), it is hard indeed for the worker to feel himself a 'free workman.' In the bureaucracy he sees the manager, in the State the employer."[1]

However belated this criticism in the mouth of one of those mainly responsible for the régime established in the U.S.S.R., and one of the authors of the transformation of man into "an object of slavery, exploitation or feudal bondage," his observations, in their essence, nevertheless remain perfectly correct in this case. It is permissible to doubt whether all the Soviet dignitaries, without exception, who talk about the Socialist order realized in the U.S.S.R., really believe what they so obstinately seek to suggest to the masses. To many eminent chiefs of the Communist Party, and even more, perhaps, to a notable proportion of its average members, Socialism has long since lost its lustre as a lodestar. Many ideas in whose name the old order of things was broken down must appear to the Russian Communists of to-day nothing more than a heavy load of brilliant—but how bitter!—memories. The fiery slogans of the past have degenerated into a hackneyed official phraseology which convinces no one in Soviet Russia, but which sadly wounds the soul of the anonymous millions and millions of human beings who can find in their own condition the most flagrant proof of the falsehood contained in the official pronouncements.[2]

1 Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, London, 1937, pp. 225, 228, and 229. Like Lenin, Trotsky believes that "in order to become social, private property must inevitably pass through the State stage as the caterpillar in order to become a butterfly must pass through the pupal stage. But the pupa is not a butterfly. Myriads of pupae perish without ever becoming butterflies. State property becomes the property of 'the whole people' only to the degree that social privilege and differentiation disappear, and therewith the necessity of the State. In other words: State property is converted into Socialist property in proportion as it ceases to be State property" (Ibid., p. 224).

2 "Instead of 'socialist enthusiasm,' indifference and the bureaucratic spirit; instead of a 'new morale,' unbounded egoism and the 'right of the strongest'; instead of 'society without classes,' a social inequality daily more marked." Such are the conclusions formed, after thirty-nine months' sojourn in the U.S.S.R., by A. Rudolf, an Austrian who, allured by the Communist ideal, wanted to serve Soviet Russia and occupied a post in that country at the Central Office of Professional Unions. (A. Rudolf, *Drei Jahre Sowjet-Union*, Reinhold-Verlag, Vienna, 1936.) Similar conclusions are vividly expressed by Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, London, 1937, pp. 604 and 605.

What political orientation can legitimately be described as Socialist? The question is complicated, and lends to discussion. One thing is certain: the builders of Socialism owe it to themselves to satisfy, as soon and as extensively as possible, the physical and cultural needs of the popular masses. This is the least that can be asked of them. Otherwise, the finest official speeches on Socialism will be as empty of the true Socialist spirit as are the formulae of classic capitalism. And yet, at the present time, concern for "the human person" is still not the aim but merely the instrument of Soviet policy, in spite of its apparent pursuit of the uplift and welfare of the individual. The masters of the U.S.S.R. pursue their own ends. They are impelled by the desire of retaining all the power in the country, and at the same time keeping the disposal of its resources wholly collectivized. In face of such objectives, the real interests of the population are inevitably relegated to the background and sacrificed without much scruple to those of the small ruling group. Under a despotic régime, closely bound up with the interests of the dominant oligarchy, State Socialism in the eyes of the masses becomes indistinguishable from State Capitalism in its harshest legal and economic forms. In the modern "capitalist" democracies the worker enjoys a liberty and a material condition of life immeasurably superior to that in the U.S.S.R. Only the enforced silence of the Soviet workers, reduced to an existence of famished slaves and deprived of the strict necessities of life, enabled Stalin, at the end of 1936, to exclaim to the VIIIth Pan-Union Congress of the Soviets: "The working class of the U.S.S.R. is a new class, emancipated from exploitation; a class such as the history of humanity has not yet known." Whereupon the great dignitaries of the Party and of the ruling administrative bodies present applauded unanimously.

The disinterested ideologists, sincere advocates of the Soviet system, who seem to be gradually disappearing in Russia, but whose number is still fairly considerable outside her boundaries, may believe that, at some vague future date, life in the U.S.S.R. will be "gay" for the whole mass of the population and not for the privileged alone. But at the present time, one cannot point to a single sign justifying a belief that, under the Soviet régime as it now exists, the situation of the workers will be improved at a more or less early date. In fact, it is impossible for the Soviets to pursue their forced economic policy otherwise than by the flagrant exploitation

of the popular masses. In vain may the future be scanned: not even the first glimmer of a new order can be discerned.

The Soviet Experiment and the World Economic Problems of our Time

Despite the moral nightmare and material pressure imposed by the Soviet experiment upon the masses of the population, it cannot be denied that the "planned" economy of the U.S.S.R. is connected with phenomena and situations extending over a much vaster basis, that is to say world-wide. In a certain respect it is a variety of the universal economic process. In many countries the State has commenced to interfere more and more in a sphere which formerly constituted the exclusive domain of activities governed by civil law. In many countries national economy is gradually assuming a form in which it is no longer regulated solely by the play of private economic interests, but more or less by the will of the central power. Daily practice alone will, in the end, determine the limit beyond which State interference must not extend. The whole problem of "directed" economy is ultimately brought face to face with this question: How to co-ordinate the eternal and fruitful stimulus of individual economic interest with the primordial necessity of overcoming economic anarchy and the social conflicts created by the one-sided domination of private interest in the production and distribution of material goods?

The Soviet experiment has at any rate thrown into full relief the extreme limit of the forbidden domain which the power of the State must in no case enter. The line of demarcation passes precisely through the point where the State's interference becomes an oppression of the individual, where it proscribes creative initiative. The Soviet power has not been content with overstepping this limit: it has gone to the last degrees of oppression of the individual, as far as his complete enslavement. Carried to its logical conclusion, the Soviet experiment has brought upon the immense country such misfortunes that their example should serve as a serious warning to anyone who might be tempted to seek through violence a remedy for economic and social ills. Morally and materially, the most essential problem of our day is to evolve, for given conditions of time and space, the practical synthesis between the maximum development of the creative forces of the individual, and the greatest

satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of the largest popular masses.

The Soviet Experiment in the Light of the History of Russia

To its economic and social plans the Soviet policy has sacrificed the human being with his indestructible material interests and spiritual aspirations. For this reason it has remained aloof from the universal thoroughfares leading to a better future. For the same reasons the policy of the Soviets is, moreover, fundamentally inorganic from a purely Russian point of view: in fact, it lacks any solid historic basis.[1] To anyone knowing anything at all about Russian

1 Non-Russian authors have sometimes expressed the idea that not only the Russian popular masses, but all Russian society in general, are by their nature anarchist and imbued with destructive propensities, and that Bolshevism constitutes, in consequence, a sort of malady inherent in Russian history.

Certainly, in the development of the Russian past, all sorts of destructive instincts and maximalist outbursts have more than once found a response in the hearts of the masses. "God protect us from witnessing a Russian rebellion, insane and ruthless!"—wrote Pushkin, with reference to a popular insurrection at the end of the XVIIIth century, under the brilliant reign of Catherine II, led by the Don Cossack, Pugachev, who was half a revolutionary and half a brigand (see above p. 133).

Yet, the instincts of destruction, of violence and of cruelty, have often had free play also in Western Europe. It suffices to recall the acts of brigandage perpetrated by the feudal lords, the anarchist peasant *jacqueries*, the excesses of the *landknechts*, the rapacities of the *condottieri*, the interminable and bloody religious wars, the horrors and cruelties of innumerable revolutions. It would, however, be a capital error to confound in Russia, as in Western Europe, the façade of the historic construction with the reverse side which exists in each State régime. The main outline of historical development is given not by secondary details but by the fundamental positive achievements.

The constructive capacities of the different elements of the Russian people can alone account for the rise of Muscovy, which so rapidly grew from a small third-class principality into a huge State. The edification of the latter was governed by the fecond idea that the duty of assuring the welfare of the State was both "the great task of the Tsar and that of the whole land," i.e. of the people themselves.

This principle of co-operation of the Sovereign with the representatives of the different social groups had undergone a great trial at the beginning of the XVIIth century, at the so-called "Times of Troubles." At this epoch, when there was no longer a Tsar (following the extinction of the Riurik Dynasty), the structure of the country had been riven to its foundation and Russia was in addition exposed to the danger of being torn asunder by foreigners.

It was then that the various Russian social forces by themselves, without the direction of any central power, restored practically anew the whole organization of the State from its shambles, relying solely on their own political sense and social

history, it is perfectly clear that in the second half of the XIXth century Russia was steadily developing toward liberty and democracy, notwithstanding considerable delays and impediments. By the fact that it repudiates the principle of individual liberty and rejects the fundamental premises of true democracy, Soviet despotism turns resolutely aside from this clearly defined historic tradition. A violent rupture of the course of history, departure from the historic ways of the country, that in the last analysis is the original sin which weighs upon Bolshevism and condemns it to inevitable failure. Bolshevism stepped across Russia's path like a terrible punishment for unexpiated faults. Instead of healing the century-old ills from which she suffered, it has from many points of view perpetuated the misdeeds from which Russia had already started to free herself.

In any event, such an immense upheaval as the Bolshevik Revolution will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on Russia's history. But the real and solid results of this Revolution may finally prove very different from what the Bolshevik leaders imagine.

An historical forecast cannot be other than subjective. Under the conditions prevailing in the Soviet régime, it is particularly difficult to decipher the final march of events: the total absence of free speech and free Press prevents the sincere desires and aspirations

experience. In these years of great ordeal, when in the provinces all social ties were dissolved, the local self-governing bodies—the so-called *Mir* (see above p. 18)—came to the rescue and their elected members took full power on the spot replacing the vanished authorities. These small self-governing communities scattered throughout the vast country and collected around their small parish hall (*Zemskaia Izba*) served first of all as a foundation on which was built up a council of all the social elements gravitating around the neighbouring town; then a larger council was formed grouping a number of townships; and finally this spontaneous movement was completed by the meeting of "A Council of the Whole Land" (or *Zemski Sobor*, see above p. 18), comprising representatives of all orders of the population: of the clergy, of the "men of service" (i.e. military and civil servants of the State), of the tradesmen, of the town-dwellers, and of the tax-paying peasant communities. Amongst the horrors of civil war and foreign invasion, these representatives of the country accomplished a task of the greatest difficulty in saving, by their own efforts, the State from its ruin. They completed this work by electing, in 1613, a new dynasty, that of the Romanovs, and accorded it, throughout the XVIIth century, all their co-operation in order to consolidate the salvation of the State.

Later on, and more than once, the personal initiative and activity of the various classes of the population helped Russia to overcome difficult situations. The victory over Napoleon, who invaded Russia in 1812, was to a great extent due to the efforts of the people themselves—including even the masses of the serfs. In the middle of the XIXth century, after the defeats suffered in the Crimean War,

of the people from manifesting themselves. Furthermore, possible external conflicts—which may well arise—would not only menace the territorial integrity of Russia; they would also be likely to provoke in her régime changes whose nature cannot at present be predicted. What we can state to-day, without risk of error, is that after having turned the Bolshevik page of her history, Russia will certainly not revert to her old social, economic, and political order.

The Bolshevik era swept across Russia like a terrible hurricane, mowing down innumerable human lives and destroying an incalculable quantity of all kinds of wealth. It has completely upset the old-established social relations and brought new social layers to the surface. The society it has created is not "without classes," as the Soviet leaders never tire of repeating; the evolution of internal relationships in the U.S.S.R., at least in the immediate future, can only accentuate the differentiation of society and consolidate any social formation which proves its willingness to always uphold the despotic power of the "Leader" at any price. On the other hand, this era, more than any other, has held out before the great popular masses the dazzling illusion of paradise on earth within man's grasp. At the same time, it has demonstrated the extreme instability and fragility of certain "historic" forces that had formerly been

which exposed the crying defects of the system then in force, Alexander II, in order to remedy them, called for the co-operation of the people. This appeal was not made in vain. At the same time, as the serfs were freed and justice re-organized, Alexander II created the local self-government institutions, the elective *Zemstvos*, and their activities subsequently proved to be very fruitful (see above p. 19). These "Great Reforms" clearly marked the dividing line between old-time Russia—that of serfdom and police bureaucracy—and the modern Russia, which assumed more and more a Europeanized aspect. Finally—as has been shown in the opening chapter of this book—a striking progress was realized in Russia during the far too short period when at the beginning of the XXth century, she benefited from a popular representation, however restricted it might have been.

The evil of the last decades of Russian history, prior to the Revolution of 1917, was in no way the preponderance of the destructive instincts over constructive efforts. Quite the contrary; the evil was that insufficient latitude was given to the creative, to the organizing capabilities of the nation. For that reason, at the critical, decisive moment of its history, the constructive forces of the Russian nation were both lacking in organization and insufficiently united. They were therefore unable successfully to resist the destructive forces which, as everywhere and always, are not long in asserting themselves when they are set free.

Finally—during the Sovietic period itself—all the destruction caused by the Bolsheviks has not completely smothered the creative capabilities of the Russian people and the heavy fetters imposed on them by the Communist régime have not entirely prevented them from achieving positive results in one branch or another.

considered immovable. However cruel the disillusionment suffered by "the sickle and hammer workers," they will scarcely be willing to efface from their memory the image of the "worker and peasant kingdom" which has been dangled before their eyes. It is not through a yearning for old times, for the ancient order of things, that the workers of the U.S.S.R. must to-day hate the Soviet power, but on account of the immense dupery it has perpetrated against them. Strong in their tens of millions, they will infallibly demand from whatever Government succeeds the Bolsheviks a much larger place in the sun than they had under the old régime, or than is now accorded them under the Bolsheviks.

It is no less certain that the economic aspect of Old Russia will have changed for ever, in many respects, as a consequence of the Bolshevik experiment.

The Bolshevik successes in the industrialization of Russia have been purchased at an extremely high price. They have been paid for not only by a thorough impoverishment of the population, but by the loss of incalculable human lives. But however great the sacrifices exacted by the Government's industrial policy, many things done in this domain are, in reality, in perfect harmony with the vast economic possibilities of the country, with its inexhaustible and varied natural wealth. It can even be said that, in the work of industrialization, the Soviet Government has followed the course of Russia's past traditions. It is certain that the idea of intensive industrialization is not, in itself, the product of an idle dream of visionaries; it is organically related to the exceptional economic progress of pre-revolutionary Russia. The greatest mistake made by the Bolsheviks in this respect is in having attempted to force the historic process too rapidly ahead of its normal evolution, and in imposing too severe an effort upon the country. For this reason, what might have been an unreserved blessing has become a crushing burden. In any event, retreat is no longer possible. To destroy what the Bolsheviks have done in the field of industrialization would constitute an act of economic vandalism: to begin again a new and senseless dilapidation of the national wealth.

New Type of Russian Intellectual

Finally, the profound upheavals sustained by the country during Bolshevik domination will not fail to leave their mark upon the spiritual life of the Russian people. While, in the outside world,

"the Russian experiment" is a subject of doctrinal study for writers, scholars, philosophers, and politicians, it is the material and moral existence of the people of Soviet Russia which has been at stake, and which the experiment has brutally brought face to face with very serious problems; its price has been the upsetting of 170 million human beings. Even before the Revolution, since about the end of the sixth decade of the XIXth century, the thirst for knowledge was becoming more and more perceptible with each new lustrum; with increasing force it gripped the lowest degrees of the people. The Bolshevik epoch has perpetuated this development. It has brought out from their apathy and spiritual stagnation even those elements which up to that time had not shaken off their cultural torpor.

The Soviet intellectuals, in their majority, no longer resemble those of former times. In August 1935, in his report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist Internationale, Manuilsky mentioned, as one of the proofs of "the final and irrevocable victory of Socialism," the fact that "from the depths of the popular masses are rising leaders, organizers, engineers, technicians, inventors, a countless multitude of audacious heroes of labour and science, thousands of ardent enthusiasts who are taking possession of the icy Arctic, bold stratonauts who defy the cosmic spaces, heroic airmen, explorers of the ocean depths, the bowels of the earth, and mountain summits." In the report he presented to the VIIIth Congress of the Soviets, on his draft for the Constitution, Stalin, on his part, stated: "Our Soviet intelligentsia is an intelligentsia of an entirely new kind: it is attached by its roots to the workmen's class and to the peasants.... The descendants of the nobility and bourgeoisie form but an insignificant part of it; 80 to 90 per cent of the Soviet intellectuals come from the workmen's class, the peasants, or other toiling elements." In these words there is a certain amount of truth, although they obviously overestimate the Soviet "achievements" and underestimate the cultural level of pre-revolutionary Russia. Since the second half of the XIXth century, Russian culture had already lost its old aristocratic character; each of the later decades of the old régime witnessed a still further democratization of secondary and higher education. It is true, however, that the number of intellectuals issuing from the workmen and peasant classes have increased considerably under the Soviets.

But what characterizes the Bolshevik epoch more particularly is not so much this cultural process in itself. This progress which had

clearly begun prior to the Revolution, even without the latter would necessarily have led to a more and more pronounced democratization of the social composition of the Russian intellectuals and would have brought them into close contact with the popular masses. On the other hand, what the Bolshevik régime has produced that is really new, is an appreciable change in the cultural aspect of the Russian intellectuals.

Education has poured over the country in a very much wider stream than in the past, but its substance has lost depth. According to the Soviet Government's own admission, the present schools are far from fulfilling their immediate purpose, even with regard to the most elementary instruction. *Pravda* wrote at the end of 1936: "It is high time the People's Commissariat for Education passed from words to deeds; it is time the Soviet school produced men equipped with sufficient knowledge."[1]

In the same issue of that paper the People's Commissar for Education of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, Bubnov, replying over his own signature to the attacks of the Press, had to admit that "the educational and instructive work of the school" needed improvement, and that public education had not yet succeeded in fulfilling its fundamental purpose, namely, to prepare "builders of Socialism, cultured, educated, imbued with the joy of life, and devoted without reserve to the Socialist fatherland."

Early in 1937, after having inspected a large number of schools, Sulimov, the President of the Council of the People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R., arrived at conclusions no less pessimistic. "Soviet children," he said, "are being taught the Russian language without being instructed in the most elementary rules of grammar; they are taught mathematics without being acquainted with the simplest arithmetical operations. For a reason that escapes me, these rules are looked upon as useless bagatelles for a Soviet country."[2]

1 *Pravda*, December 22, 1936.

2 *For Communist Education*, January 12, 1937. The low level of education among the popular masses in the U.S.S.R. has also not escaped the notice of foreigners who continue to express fanatic admiration for the Soviet régime. In reply to André Gide, who has become convinced of the total absence of individual liberty in the U.S.S.R., Leon Feuchtwanger tries to defend the Soviet régime by pointing out that the major portion of the Russian people is still learning its A B C. "Gide is quite vehement," he writes, "on the subject of 'the unification of mind' in the Soviet Union, the 'levelling' process which is on the increase. He forgets that we are now creating an entirely new culture here which is still in its initial stage, and that a notable proportion, the major proportion, of the people are in a manner of speaking still learning to read." (*Pravda*, December 30, 1936.)

Such a state of affairs is not in itself conducive to the selection of well-educated and widely cultured men from the depths of the populace. But an even more powerful factor in lowering the general level of Russian culture, especially in its higher grades, is the attitude of the Soviet Government itself. Since its establishment it has never ceased to be, on principle, an inveterate enemy of real, broad culture of the mind. Soviet political leaders constantly talk about the new era of proletarian culture, science, literature, and art which has just commenced in the U.S.S.R. But in "the workers' country" they themselves are fettering critical thought, because in their eyes it is dangerous to the Soviet régime. The new Constitution adopted in December 1936, by the VIIIth Congress of the Soviets brought no change in this respect. Complicated and modified by "Leninism" and "Stalinism," Marxism in the U.S.S.R. remains the official and compulsory religion. That is why the spiritual life of the country, once so ardent and colourful, is condemned to clothe itself sombrely and adopt a provincial, pallid, monotonous bearing.

The Soviet Government does not, of course, object to its engineers, technicians, students of the so-called exact sciences, naturalists, physicians, etc., making new discoveries or new inventions in their own particular sphere, and indeed assists them. But it obstinately refuses to recognize that in each branch, however narrow, the work would benefit enormously if handled by specialists who at the same time were men of broad education or scholars with vast aspirations. Not only in the realm of letters and art, but in that of the exact sciences, such as mathematics and physics, the real creator must, to a certain extent, have the soul of a poet. The president of the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R., Sulimov, touched upon this subject before the delegates of the Teachers' Congress in Moscow: "For quite a long time we have been guilty of the sin of flaunting our lack of culture; it is no longer necessary, we said, to know literature in order to become a good engineer, and one can make an excellent agricultural expert without having the slightest idea of Pushkin, and without even knowing how to write properly." This tendency has been called "Leftist"; Sulimov thinks it would be more accurate to call it "doltish" (making a pun on the words in Russian).[1]

One must surely welcome the fact that the Soviet leaders, those inflexible censors of the human mind, seem at last to be realizing that

1 *Pravda*, December 30, 1936.

their censorship must have some reasonable limit, but for the moment such admissions are nothing but futile outbursts of rhetoric. In order to break definitely with the "old sins," which Sulimov has so graphically described, it would be necessary to authorize "the engineer and the agriculturist" to familiarize themselves not only with Pushkin but with all the vast intellectual and spiritual domain to which access is still strictly forbidden to the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. Of course, the gifts of the Russian people have remained as they were before, and these have in fact enabled them, despite the Soviet régime, to produce a number of excellent technicians, scientific agriculturists, eminent scholars and inventors. They are succeeding in boring their way through, notwithstanding oppression from the Soviet censorship, but how much more considerable might their work have been in an atmosphere of liberty! As against these individual successes, it is all the more significant that nothing of value has been created under Bolshevik domination in those fields where the censor reigns supreme, compelling every person to keep constantly "in tune" with the authorities. In the course of its twenty years of existence, the U.S.S.R. has not produced a single philosopher, a single sociologist, a single jurist, a single economist, a single journalist or critic worthy of the name. In that lapse of time, the U.S.S.R. has failed to produce any great scholar of history capable of reconciling the science of exact detailed analysis with that of a broad and harmonious synthesis. For synthetic study is still strictly forbidden; everything has been set forth once and for all in the ever-infallible works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Literary and artistic works themselves have been pitilessly and savagely mutilated by the Bolshevik Government ever since the early days of its advent.

The masters of the U.S.S.R. are bending every effort to expel from the Russian *intelligentzia* that spirit of freedom which was once its essential feature. And in this respect Soviet despotism has succeeded where autocracy failed even in its most reactionary and sombre days. It is obvious that all the representatives of Russian intelligence have not bowed before the Bolshevik dictatorship; but the most stoic are reduced to retire within themselves and to keep silent. Those who have remained in the Soviet arena do not cease to humiliate themselves in verbal and written manifestations of gratitude to the masters for various favours received from them, such as better food, free holiday tickets to rest houses, in a word

for a "gayer" existence than is the lot of the others. A life of slavery begets a slave language: it is not surprising that the rank-and-file intellectuals bow servilely before any Communist "secretary," when prominent persons in cultured society, members of the Russian Academy of Sciences, declare unblushingly at a meeting: "It is in the light of the only scientific method, that of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, that we shall approach the solution of the problems confronting us."[1]

The Stalin Realm of Fear

Despots of the Stalin type must fear forces of any kind, including those they themselves have called into being. Hence, under the absolute power of this leader, "the land of the workers" has been transformed into a sort of Oriental satrapy which, in its lack of principle and its contempt for the human being, has far surpassed the empire of Abdul-Hamid. The constant terrorist repression directed against leading members of the Communist Party, against the high command of the army and prominent administrative and economic officials, together with the threatening attacks against scholars and writers, are so many manifestations of the Stalin despotism intended primarily to leave before the dictator nothing but an impalpable human dust. Stalin destroys everything that dares show the slightest disposition towards independence, everything that claims the tiniest personal place in the sun.

Soviet events once more confirm the old truth: Revolution, like Saturn, devours its children. The men of the Bolshevik revolution are perishing one after the other, victims in their turn of the barbarous terror they once employed for their own ends. But simultaneously Stalin is destroying many elements which contributed a certain stability and a certain intelligence to the internal relations of the U.S.S.R.

Under the veil of mystery which the Government throws over everything that occurs, the internal situation of the Soviet Union remains enigmatic from many points of view. The highest dignitaries do not know what the immediate future has in store for them, nor do they know to-day what names they will be obliged to worship or curse to-morrow, but history teaches that the mutual extermination of terrorists has always marked the beginning of the end of terrorist reigns. The further Stalin ventures down this path, the

1 *Pravda*, December 30, 1936.

more he increases the chances of his own undoing. Those who live in the "realm of fear" are faced with the dilemma of killing or being killed.

On the other hand, we cannot close our eyes to the external possibilities into which the Stalinian terror may lead Russia. Soviet society could not be reduced to the condition of human dust without in return weakening the material and military power of the country and aggravating the danger of foreign assault.

Whatever may be the immediate fate in store for the men of the Bolshevik revolution, it is certain that the task of building the Russia of to-morrow will devolve upon the new generations of Russian intellectuals.

The Rapprochement Between the Intelligentzia and the People

As we have already stated, the spirit of the Russian *intelligentzia* has unquestionably declined as compared with the past. The intellectuals and everything they touch bear the seal of slavery and a triteness clearly perceptible at a glance. This debasement of "tone," this general "levelling" of minds so deplored by André Gide, has helped at least as much as the social reshuffle we have mentioned to bridge the gulf formerly existing between the Russian people and the intellectuals. The latter have come down from the clouds where they used to dwell. They now speak the same language as the people, and that language is anything but speculative or theoretic. It is realistic, it is matter-of-fact, it reflects the immediate material cares of everyday life. Those who speak this practical and sober language apparently consider their servility to Stalin simply as one of the expedients at their disposal for the betterment of their situation, and for rendering life "more gay." By having drawn socially and spiritually closer to the popular masses, the intellectuals of to-day will find it less difficult than it was for their predecessors of the revolutionary epoch of March 1917 to join hands with the people; it will be easier for them to co-operate with the masses against the régime which has sacrificed the human individual to social experiments. However, if this alliance is to become a danger to the Soviet power, the intellectuals must first raise their voice in favour of respect for the individual and his liberty, calling upon the Government to really meet the great popular masses and satisfy their material and spiritual needs to the fullest possible extent.

And for this it is essential that the intellectuals should again become imbued with that spirit of democratic liberty which has deserted them. Sooner or later, in one way or another, this is bound to happen.

First Glimmers in the "Realm of Fear"

Even to-day, under the outward cloak of slave life and habits, there are spiritual movements in Soviet Russia which have not yet fully crystallized, but which clearly indicate that Soviet society is gradually ceasing, even in the eyes of the Government, to be negligible human dust. The Press preserves absolute silence on these phenomena. But their trace is found daily in the oratorical outbursts of the Soviet rulers, who complacently enlarge upon the themes of liberty, democracy, patriotism, the exceptional talents of the Russian people, its innate creative initiative, the right of everyone to live in beauty, the role of the family, the necessity of seriously studying the history, letters, and art of the country. The Soviet Government makes every effort to conceal its persistent social experiments and the despotic nature of its régime under the historic folds of the national costume, and by official admiration for the creative genius of the Russian people.

If the Soviet authorities now venture to touch upon subjects which have long been banned in the U.S.S.R., it is because they are constrained to do so. It can safely be said that the new watchwords they have issued are not due to any desire on their part to meet the people, but to the necessity of taking into account its ever-growing spiritual aspirations. Up to now, all these forced concessions amount, after all, to a sort of political manœuvre, an attempt to confuse public opinion, to bandage it up like a mummy and prevent it from waking. But the very fact of having to resort to such methods irrefutably indicates that the architects of the vast prison have discovered a dangerous rift in the walls behind which they have sought to shut up the spiritual life of the country. It is more than doubtful that they will succeed in closing it again. The ideas of liberty, democracy, and creative initiative of the individual are utterly incompatible with a despotic régime of any kind. The Government may, it is true, allay its own anxiety by telling itself that permission to take up the study of Pushkin will divert "the engineer and scientific agriculturist" from other ideas, more dangerous and explosive. Yet Pushkin, that poet of humanism, of *joie de vivre*, of the sun, that Russian European full of faith in human reason, in the

creative power of a free spirit, is absolutely incompatible with the ideology and practice of the Soviet régime. That is why the cult of Pushkin, which is at present pentrating deeper and deeper into the popular masses, is a very grave portent for the central power: it forebodes the reawakening of the individual principle, which for twenty years the Soviet authorities have used every effort to extirpate.

Emancipation of the Human Individual and the Future of Russia

Thus the thirst for liberty, the notion of self-respect, the necessity of removing spiritual and economic boundaries, all these features and characteristics of the old Russian élite are beginning to be appropriated by the intellectuals of to-day. However, it is not in the name of an abstract idealism or of a "self-denying love for one's neighbour" that the intellectuals of the new Soviet generation will undoubtedly repudiate the fundamental principles of the despotism established in the U.S.S.R.: they will be brought to it, without losing any of the practical dryness of their reasoning, by cold egoistic calculations.

The moment the Soviet élite opens its fight for emancipation of the human individual, the vast popular masses will be at its side. One need only observe the concessions the Soviet Government has been forced to make in the economic field, in order to realize that the individual principle is gaining ground among the "working" community and is beginning to formulate its claims. By reason of the fact that thoughtful intellectuals and the popular masses, taught by the terrible experiment inflicted on them, will one day march together and fight for emancipation of the individual, the Soviet régime will at last be driven to an irremediable collapse.

At the present time it is, of course, still impossible to say when and how "the spirit of freedom" may soar toward the vast horizons to which it aspires, but it is already filtering gradually through the walls of the Soviet prison. The struggle for the emancipation of the individual is being broached in the U.S.S.R.

To the new generation whose eyes are opening to the creative value of liberty, one is involuntarily seized with the desire to cry out the evocative words of Pushkin: "Hail! young, unknown people!"

Appendix

Russian Political Thought and Parties Before the Revolution of 1917

In the "thirties" of the XIXth century the idealistic philosophy of Shelling and Hegel had aroused interest among well-educated Russian people. They sought to apply to Russian problems the conclusions of the German thinkers. In this connection two distinct currents of thought were developed, the one represented by the "Slavophils," and the other by the "Westerners."

The "Slavophils" started from the thesis that the historic trend of every nation follows its own particular road, and that Russia is no exception to this rule. They claimed that in many respects the development of Russia even follows lines in direct opposition to those of the history of Western Europe. The "Westerners," on the contrary, considered that the evolution of Russia and of Western Europe had had, in the main, the same characteristics, and that the backwardness of Russia, as compared with the Western countries, had been exclusively due to circumstances foreign to its inherent natural historical trend. Whereas the "Slavophils" condemned Peter the Great for having shaken the foundations of traditional Russian life and imposed an alien Western culture on the Russian upper classes, the "Westerners" contended that Peter's reforms had proved acceptable to the Russian people solely because they were in accord with the essential European spirit of Russia. The "Slavophils" argued that Western Europe is rationalist, individualistic, and juridically formalist; that the life of the real Russia—the Russia which has not been infected with the virus of European culture—had always been inspired by the Greek Orthodox faith, the communal self-government (the *Mir*), and the inner consciousness of truth and justice. In their eyes, the Russian social ideal has found its expression in the peasant community, which rejected the individualistic form of landed property and recognized only communal ownership of the soil. Russia's natural political system, they believed, was a paternal one and should be based on the motto: "All the force of the power to the Tsar; all the force of opinion to the people."

Although the "Slavophils" agreed that the monarch should wield full power, the reactionary Government of Nicholas I regarded them with disfavour for their advocacy of free speech and thought, and their aversion to the régime of universal police control, characteristic of that reign. The attitude of the Government was of course still more severe towards the "Westerners," who desired that Russia should rapidly adopt the political institutions and the economic organization of Western Europe.

Certainly not only the avowed representatives of the Westerners, V. G. Bielinsky, Prof. T. N. Granovsky, the well-known political *émigré* Alexander Herzen, but also the founders of the Slavophil doctrine, A. S. Khomiakov, the brothers Kireievsky, Iu. F. Samarin and the brothers Aksakov, undoubtedly held progressive views, according to the ideas of the times. Alexander Herzen wrote that these two currents of thought were "indivisible, though they could be likened to the Roman god Janus, whose eyes looked two different ways." Later, however, when they saw Russia become more and more infected by "the virus of europeanization," the last eminent protagonists of Slavophilism, C. Leontiev, and the famous adviser of the Emperor Alexander III, C. P. Pobiedonostsev, made use of every means "to freeze" Russia. The latter was prominent among the instigators of the reactionary policy practised by the Russian Government at the end of the XIXth and at the beginning of the XXth century.

In the "fifties" of the XIXth century, exponents of Socialist ideas had begun more and more to play a part in Russian intellectual circles, alongside the "Slavophils" and the "Westerners." For a comparatively long time, all the Russian Socialists belonged to what was then called the Populist school (*Narodniki*).

The Populists had much in common with the Slavophils. Both schools showed indifference, sometimes even hostility, towards all forms of European constitutionalism; both held that Russia had had a specific historical trend; both idealized the peasant's "popular soul." Finally, both were convinced that the Russian system of common land-ownership by the peasants was the ideal system. Like the Slavophils, the Populists wrongly considered that this system had existed in Russia from time immemorial.[1] In all other respects the ideas of the Populists were quite different from those

1 With reference to the comparatively recent origin of the communal tenure of land see footnotes on pp. 28 and 29.

of the Slavophils. In opposition to the latter, the supposed pereniality of the communal tenure of land led the Populists to the conclusion that the Russian peasant was a "born Socialist," and, in their eyes, it followed from this feature in peasant psychology, that Russia would be able to enter directly into the realm of Socialism, without passing through the Western stage of capitalism, with its proletarians and its class war. The Populists were ready to engage in a revolutionary struggle to aid and accelerate this transition into Socialism. The Western inspirers of the Populists were not the German idealist philosophers Hegel and Schelling, as was the case of the "Slavophils" and the "Westerners." The conceptions of the Populists originated with Fuerbach of the Left Wing of Hegelism, the materialists Moleschott, Vogt and Büchner, the English Positivists Mill, Spencer, and Darwin, and the ideologists of the so-called Utopian Socialism, Fourier and Proudhon. The leaders of the Russian Populists were Chernyshevsky, Lavrov and —much later—Mikhailovsky.

About 1860 the social composition of the Russian *intelligentzia*[1] began to undergo a manifest change. Up to then the intellectuals had been recruited solely from the liberal circles of the nobility, which alone was well educated. The beginning of the reign of Alexander II saw the rise of new intellectual social circles which soon were to form the majority of the *intelligentzia*. The great Russian writer Turgenev, a Westerner and an idealist, gave those newcomers the name of *Nihilists* in his novel *Fathers and Sons*. The name persisted and was given mistakenly to all representatives of Russian revolutionary tendencies, by people with superficial knowledge of the matter. Turgenev, besides, did not invent the name; it already existed, but was used as a term of contempt by the ideological adversaries of the *Nihilists*.

In reality, the *Nihilist* did not stand for any clearly defined doctrine. Being the product of a sudden initiation to scientific studies, the *Nihilist* embodied the type of youth, which had just discovered positive materialism. Intoxicated by his new knowledge, which often was but superficially assimilated, often torn away from

1 The appellation of *Intelligentzia*—which is generally translated more or less closely as "intellectuals"—originated with Herzen. But the social group covered by this name was borne at the time of Peter the Great and his reforms. It is men like Novikov and Radischev who must be considered the fathers of the Russian intellectuals, who generation after generation have made the service of the masses the basic principle of their life-work.

the Social surroundings in which he was born, and held by obsolete class distinctions, the *Nihilist* took the stand of a sworn enemy of all "prejudices," including those of religion. In his eyes, only the human individual was interesting, for all social problems were dependent on the latter's mental development. He repudiated the duty of "social service"—the foundation stone of the idealism which had always inspired the Russian intellectuals. Pissarev, a writer of those times, preferred to the appellation of *Nihilist*, that of "Realist with critical reasoning," and thus described the lines they should follow: "Everything that can be broken, must be broken; only that which is strong enough to resist the onslaught can be made use of. . . . Always strike to the right and to the left. No harm can result from this."[1] The apparent prestige of this theory did not last. If mention of this relatively unimportant movement has been made, it is only in order to dissipate some existing misunderstanding as to the meaning of the term *Nihilist*. From the outset of the seventies onward Russian youth cast aside this destructive scepticism and came back to traditional idealistic enthusiasm which urged the intellectuals to serve the cause of the masses, at least as they understood it and often naïvely.

The socialist movement of the Populists continued to be a live force for some considerable time, in spite of the rise of Marxism in Russia since the two last decades of the XIXth century.[2] Even after the

1 It is frequently said that Russian intellectuals have kept certain survivals of *Nihilism*, among others its absence of religious sentiment. This summary judgment is a mistaken one. Even at the time when the passionate interest for natural science and for materialistic philosophy was at its height, among the youth of the day many renounced their materialistic views to follow a truly religious inspiration. They discovered that it was easy, even logically necessary, to recognize the Divine principle in man instead of making man himself into a god, i.e. to use Dostoievsky's words, to substitute "the humanization of God" to the "deification of the man." It is also very characteristic that even in the XXth century an influential group of religious-minded Russian intellectuals—among whom Vladimir Soloviov held the first place—tried to instil new spiritual force into the Orthodox Church, to reinforce its moral authority and direct it to towards service to the communities of the faithful instead of service to the State. This group even tried, although in vain, to make high Church dignitaries take this line. Generally speaking the typical attitude of the Russian intellectuals towards matters of faith is less a lack of religious sentiment than the reprobation of certain aspects of the official policy of the established Church. Put under State control by Peter the Great, the Orthodox Church too often forgot that its first duty was obedience to its Divine Master, and not to temporal power.

2 See p. 94.

Revolution of 1917 the Populist school of thought retained a certain number of followers. During that long period it did not escape modifications. In the beginning, although revolutionary in its principal aims, it restricted its practical activities mainly to cultural propaganda among the students, the peasants and the workmen. In 1874 the Populists decided to "go to the people," answering the call sent out by Nicholas Chaikovsky, Prince Peter Kropotkin, and Serge Stepniak. During the course of this episode, an army of young folks, many of whom were barely out of their 'teens, donned garments of the kind worn by the peasantry, and went to live among the latter, in their villages, in order to spread cultural propaganda among the people and at the same time to learn "popular Socialist wisdom" at its source. Despite their attire, the peasants refused to accept the inexperienced young apostles as belonging to their own class, and their adventure ended in nearly 800 of the Socialist missionaries being rounded up by the police, over 200 of them being sent to prison.

Far from being discouraged by the failure of this adventure, the Populists then entered on an open struggle with the Government. In 1879 they created a secret association "The Will of the People," the object of which—contrary to previous Populist declarations—was to fight for political freedom and parliamentary régime. To the Government's increasingly reactionary and repressive measures they responded with bomb-throwing and the assassination of persons in high places. This terrorist activity ended with the murder of Alexander II, on March 1, 1881. This atrocious act was strongly denounced by all classes of the population, and resulted in the Populists losing much of their former influence over the masses. Besides, the "Will of the People" was deprived of all its leaders, who were either executed or deported to Siberia, and practically ceased to exist.[1]

This movement was resumed as an organization only in 1900,

1 During the course of the seventies, secondary currents appeared in the revolutionary movement. Amongst these is to be noted the circle of the anarchist Bakunin. He was hostile to all "politics," considering that the State could be nothing more than an instrument for the exploiting of the masses. He thought that the Russian peasant commune should serve as a basis for a free federation of tiny Socialist communities. He preached direct action without delay. He had more influence outside of Russia than in the country itself. As to the circles of the protagonist of conspiracy Nechaiev and the "Jacobean" Tkachev, we have spoken of these on pages 132 to 136.

when the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party was founded. Although it admitted acts of terrorism as one of the means of political struggle, it showed a more definite and positive approach to current problems than its predecessors of the XIXth century, and it abandoned "Utopian socialism" in favour of "Scientific Socialism." This group remained, however, opposed to Marxism, considering that the collectivist movement in Russia should be based, not on the workmen alone, but on the community of interests of the peasants, the workmen and the working *intelligentzia*. Thus from its inception, the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party had to compete with the action of the *Social-Democrats*. This latter party, inspired by Marxism, had been created two years before the *Socialist-Revolutionary* Party and had rapidly acquired influence in intellectual and workmen's circles.[1]

Russian Liberalism, as an independent current of political thought, appeared towards the end of the "sixties" of the last century. In the first years of the reign of Alexander II, Russian Socialism and Russian Liberalism were so linked together, in persons and in ideas, that it was difficult to discriminate between them. A striking example of this was afforded by the personality of Herzen, an eminent moulder of opinion among the Russian youth of that period. He was a convinced "Westerner" and, at the same time, a Socialist. This did not prevent him from also favouring some ideas of the Slavophils. But already, towards the end of the "fifties," Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov and Pissarev, the new moulders of thought and the moving spirits of the progressive newspapers and reviews, repudiated the idealistic conception of the preceding generation, "the fathers," as they called them, and thus prepared the scission of the progressives into Liberals and Socialists. It is about the same period—in 1862 to be precise—that the Westerner Kavelin took up a position definitely hostile to the revolutionaries in the letters he wrote to Herzen whose close friend he was and whose opinions he had until then shared. It is, however, from the Polish insurrection of 1863—and from the deep emotion which it provoked in Russian circles whose various elements received it in different ways—that

1 To the *Social Democratic* Party was attached a strong organization, the *Bund*, grouping tens of thousands of Jewish proletariat in Western Russia won over to *Social-Democratic* ideas.

Further details in regard to the *Social-Democrats* are given in Chapter III, pp. 92–100.

actually dates the breaking up of Russian thought into three principal and distinct currents: Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist.

For a long time prevailing conditions in Russia did not permit open political activities in the form of organized parties. Consequently Liberal thought had to resort to means of expression other than party activity. As a result of Alexander II's Great Reforms, Liberal ideas found an outlet in the local self-government institutions, created in 1864, and also in the Press, which in 1865 had been endowed with a certain measure of liberty. Down to 1905 these were almost the only channels through which Liberal thought could seek to influence governmental action. For this reason, the *zemstvos* and the progressive publications were selected for restrictions whenever the policy of the Government took a fresh reactionary turn. In the same way, during the reign of Alexander II and the earlier years of that of Alexander III, all Liberal projects for the reorganization of the régime, which then were being adumbrated from time to time in progressive circles, invariably took the *zemstvos* as their starting-point. They proposed that delegates should be elected by the *zemstvos* of each province to form in the capital a permanent committee with consultative functions in legislative matters.[1] The hope of the Liberals was, of course, that such a committee would furnish the thin edge of the wedge that would ultimately lead to the constitution of a modern parliament.

The Liberal traditions of the *zemstvos* were not weakened when, under Alexander III, the reactionary course of the Government was affirmed. The accession of Nicholas II, in 1894, at first raised hopes among these provincial assemblies. Many of them voted resolutions recommending a liberal change in the régime. Although the word "constitution" was not used in these motions, the new Tsar, when receiving a deputation from the *zemstvos* in January 1895, disappointed their expectations by stating his intention "firmly to defend the principle of autocracy as did his father" and to oppose "senseless dreams." Sanctions were even imposed on the most liberal spirits of the *zemstvos*. Thus following his father's example and inspired by the latter's counsellor Pobiedonostsev, Nicholas II continued the reactionary policy of Alexander III.

1 Such were the projects of Valuev, the Grand Duke Constantin Nicolaevich, Loris Melikov, and Count N. Ignatiev.

In the long run this course could only aggravate opposition sentiments. As a matter of fact, at the end of the XIXth century, constitutional aspirations had already begun to take a strong hold on a large section of educated Russians.

In June 1902, after several private meetings between Liberals who were members of *zemstvos*, it was decided that a Liberal newspaper, called *Liberation*, should be founded at Stuttgart, outside the Russian frontiers. This journal, although it was prohibited in Russia, was widely read there. The editor elected to direct it was Peter Struve, who had played an important part in the constitution of the Russian *Social Democratic* Party, and had afterwards embraced Liberal ideas. A year later the Liberal members of the *zemstvos*, with a number of university professors and of journalists, founded an illegal association called the "Liberation League." This body, while repudiating the revolutionary struggle, had as its object the union of all the progressive forces of the country on a constitutional and democratic platform.

Parallel with the birth and the growth of an independent Liberal movement, exponents of Conservative thought also developed a separate school of their own. Its founder was Katkov, who built up a coherent and practical political programme from the various traditional Conservative ideas. He was a brilliant journalist, who in his younger days had been inclined towards Liberalism, when he admired British political institutions. The Polish insurrection of 1863 caused him to make a complete change in his political creed. While Herzen and Bakunin sympathized with the Poles in their struggle for political independence, and even tried to help them, Katkov had been profoundly embittered in his feelings by the Polish revolt against his fatherland. In a series of passionate articles, in which he took an extremely nationalist point of view, he not only attacked the Poles, but at the same time the whole of the progressive sections of Russian opinion.

Katkov's change of attitude made an enormous impression on Russian opinion. Many Liberals, both of the Slavophil and of the "Westerners" shade, passed over to his side. The influence of Herzen immediately declined very substantially, and the circulation of his newspaper *The Bell* (which was published abroad) sank to less than one-quarter of its previous figure. Katkov forthwith became the acknowledged leader of Russian Conservative thought. For the

first time in history a Russian journalist began to exercise a direct influence in the highest governmental spheres.[1]

From that period down to the disappearance of monarchical power, in 1917, the Conservative Press exercised an unceasing influence on the Government. Nevertheless, definite parties of the Right, the same as parties of the Left, were openly formed and developed a regular activity, only when, after the revolutionary events of 1905, the law authorized free organization of political parties, and it became possible for the first time to fight for definite political programmes, in the Press and in public meetings.

As we have already seen, these events led to the manifesto of Nicholas II, of October 17–30, 1905, which turned autocratic Russia juridically into a Constitutional Monarchy, and the first Duma met in the spring of 1906.

The relative strength of the parties in the Duma did not give even an approximate idea of the extent to which one or other political trend of thought was held in the country. The first legislature of the Duma, the so-called "Duma of the People's Wrath," had most marked Left tendencies. The Right wing in this assembly was represented by thirty-one deputies of the Moderate-Conservative "Party of the 17th of October," otherwise the *Octobrists*, who had adopted this appellation to underline their adherence to the new order of things inaugurated by the manifesto of October 17th, 1905. To the left of the *Octobrists* were the fourteen members of the Liberal "Party of Democratic Reforms." This was followed by the "Party of the People's Freedom" or *Constitutional-Democrats*, who generally were called *K.D.*[2] after the Russian initial letters of the party name. This group was the most influential of all Russian Liberal Parties. It returned the most delegates to the first Duma, namely one hundred and ninety-six out of a total of four hundred and seventy-eight. As to the Socialist Parties, they were numerically

1 Katkov was soon joined by Leontiev, who became the theorist of Russian extreme Conservative thought. His doctrine included many ideas drawn from the Slavophils. The successor of Katkov in the editorship of his newspaper (the *Moscow News*) was Tikhomirov, a former member of "The Will of the People" organization and a repentant terrorist. Among the ideological co-disciples of Katkov and Leontiev, a prominent place was held by Pobiedonostsev, who was the inspirer of Alexander III's reactionary policy.

2 "The *Constitutional Democratic* Party" was formed in 1905 from the above-mentioned "Liberation League" when altered political conditions legally permitted the forming of political parties.

weak in the Duma, as both the *Social-Democrats* and the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* had boycotted the elections. Still the *Social-Democrats* had secured seventeen seats, occupied mostly by representatives of the Caucasus. Finally, a number of peasant deputies gathered round a few Socialistic members holding populist views and formed the Labourite Party (*trudoviki*). They held one hundred seats.[1] The first Duma lived for less than two and a half months. On July 20, 1906, its dissolution was decreed, the Government considering it too advanced to be able to collaborate with it.

In the second Duma, however, the majority again belonged to the opposition. Whereas the number of representatives of the *Constitutional Democrats* in it was reduced to ninety-two members, the total number of Socialist deputies rose to the impressive figure of one hundred and thirteen, as a consequence of their having given up their tactic of boycotting the elections. The respective members of the "Labourite Group," and likewise those of the "Party of the 17th of October" remained unchanged. Alongside with the noticeable increase of the Left wing, a feature of the second Duma was the appearance in it of representatives of the Right parties, which were non-existent in the first Duma. These deputies of the Right occupied twenty-two seats and were divided into two groups: the Extreme Right and the Moderate Right.[2]

By reason of its oppositional character, the second Duma was short-lived in its turn. Opened on March 5, 1907, it was dissolved on June 16th of the same year. Having lost faith in the fidelity of the peasants to the régime, the Government decided to infringe the constitutional law by ordinance. On June 16, 1907, the electoral law was altered, so as to increase the influence on the elections of the more affluent townsfolk and the big landowners.[3]

The third Duma (1907–1912) elected in accordance with the new

1 Besides the groups just mentioned, the first Duma also included thirty-two members of the "Polish Union" and eighty-eight non-party members.

2 The Extreme Right group was linked outside the Duma with the "Union of the Russian People," and the "Union of the Archangel Michael," which functioned in every centre of any importance. These local unions were formed with the help and with the financial assistance of some of the authorities. These organizations led an active propaganda for the return to autocracy. Their unscrupulous and benighted zeal made them more than once take part in Jewish pogroms and indulge in violence towards individual intellectuals. In a few cases they did not even stop short of political murder (as the assassination of the members of the first Duma, Herzenstein and Yollos).

3 See p. 42.

mode of election proved to be "law abiding." In the masses it got the name of the "Landowner's Duma." The members of the Right increased in it to one hundred and forty-six, but the most numerous group was found to be that of the "Party of the 17th of October," with its one hundred and fifty-three deputies. In this way, the Right and the *Octobrists* together held the majority of seats in the third Duma. For some time the Premier, Stolypin, clearly aimed at basing his policy on the support of the *Octobrists*. Their leader, A. Guchkov, on his part, was willing to work with Stolypin. The collaboration of the Government with the majority in the Duma was shortlived.

By the time the fourth Duma (1912–1917)[1] was called, the reactionary policy of the Government drove not only the *Octobrists*, but even both groups of the Moderate Right section—the Centre and the Nationalists—into opposition. These two groups together with the *Octobrists*, the Progressists, and the *Constitutional-Democrats*, towards the end of the old régime, united themselves into the "Progressive Bloc."[2]

The often undisguised reluctance of the Imperial Government to find common political ground with the Duma was bound to hamper its legislative work. The consequent mutual distrust threatened the stability of the régime instituted by the manifesto of October 1905.

1 The relative strength of the parties in the fourth Duma which was destined to face the Revolution and even to be at the head of it for a short time, was as follows: Extreme Right, 64 members; Nationalists, 38; Centre, 33; Party of the 17th October, 99; Progressists, 47; *Constitutional Democrats*, 58; Labourites, 10; *Social-Democrats*, 14; Polish Union, 9; White Russian Lithuanian Group, 6; Moslem Group, 6; Non-party deputies, 5; Total, 439 deputies.

2 See page 49.

INDEX OF NAMES

(including changes in the names of the principal towns)

O

P

R

S

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

D

T

U

V

W

Z

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